PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TO ADDRESS ACADEMIC DIVERSITY IN EGYPTIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

by

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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Abstract

Preparing school leaders for academic diversity is an underdeveloped area in the Egyptian educational landscape. This study examined the experiences of nine school leaders in intensive university-led online training to enhance their inclusive education knowledge and skills. The nine participants work in five different international schools in New Cairo (e.g., school principals, academic coordinators, and teacher leaders). The training had two components: coursework and practicum. Besides the 36-hour course work about inclusive leadership, participants were engaged in critical friendship group discussions to analyze administrative dilemmas of academic diversity. A convergent mixed methods research design was used to explore the leaders' experiences during six synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The researcher collected the study data from six different qualitative and quantitative instruments: The Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership, Learner Evaluation of Instruction Survey, interview transcripts, sessions' transcripts, reflective logs, and the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire. The findings indicated the absence of the school owners' vision and school systems for academic diversity in the five schools. Participants revealed their dissatisfaction with the staff qualifications and practices to support students with diverse learning needs in their schools. This study suggests the implementation of an evidence-based support system in Egyptian schools, and it recommends a professional development model for teachers and leaders with infused courses about academic diversity and inclusion. Also, this study may inform Egyptian principal standards and help in creating plausible school-based policies and procedures for academic diversity in Egyptian regular schools.

Keywords: Inclusive leadership, academic diversity, preparation program, organizing system

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Men in My Life:

To my father, Reda Elzalabany, who has always been my backbone and my guiding force.

To my husband, Ihab Swedan, who has been a marvelous supporter of my wildest dreams.

To my Two Things (sons), Yehia and Yassine, who I hope this shows that anything is possible.

I also, dedicate this dissertation to my mother, sister, and my aunt you were always supportive.

And finally, to my lovely colleagues, Mahogany and Iman who have supported me in the worst of times with humor, love, encouragement, and prayers.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation focuses on school leader training to implement evidence-based knowledge and practices supporting academic diversity in the Egyptian educational setting. Early in this dissertation process, I intended to support teachers' development and education about inclusive education. However, through my professors' insightful discussions and guidance, I shifted my scope of research to focus on authentic transformational leaders who motivate and empower teachers supporting all students. Having said that, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all my JHU professors and my advisers, Dr. Stephen Pape, and Dr. Russanne Hozayin for their thoughtful feedback, patience, and everlasting support. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee member, Dr. Beth Kobett, for believing in me and for her constant help along the way.

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Executive Summary

This study focused on enhancing school leaders' inclusive knowledge and skills to design a school support system for academic diversity in Egyptian international schools. The strong legislative foundation (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, art. 81 & 82, 2014) and Ministerial Decrees (No. 42 of 2015) promote inclusive practices in regular school settings. The need is evident to remove barriers and establish a multi-tiered system of support to improve the achievement of students with diverse learning needs in Egyptian schools. This mixed-method study explored the experience of school leaders during university-based inclusive leadership training. The study aimed to train nine Egyptian school leaders to gain an adequate level of inclusive knowledge and skills to build an inclusive learning environment in their schools.

Problem of Practice

Since the 1990s, the Egyptian government has attempted to follow global inclusive practices (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2015; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2020; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994). Despite the clear efforts, limited and fragmented attempts translated the above-mentioned Ministerial Decree and national policies into practices in Egyptian public and private schools (Parnell, 2017). A clear implementation plan is needed to support the MOE's strategic national educational vision. Furthermore, the school leaders who are the implementors of educational policies have outdated preparation programs and limited development opportunities for academic diversity (OECD, 2015). Egyptian teachers use outdated traditional teacher-centered pedagogic practices; teaching-to-the-test is the dominant teaching method to support students' performance and teaching and learning opportunities (Badran & Toprak, 2020; Hargreaves, 1997; Hargreaves, 2001; Sobhy, 2012). Teachers' training programs

lack a comprehensive vision, efficiency, and the required practicum (Zaalouk, 2013). The principal standards for academic diversity are underdeveloped; the need to design educational leaders' preparation and development programs to serve academic diversity is evident (Alkhateeb, Hadidi, & Alkhateeb,2016; Gaad, 2011; Ghoneim, 2014). The role of an instructional transformational leader who implements the national policy and builds teachers' capacity is essential. The study's problem of practice focuses on the school leaders who face barriers when attempting to provide high-quality academic programs to support the academic achievement of students with diverse learning needs in Egyptian schools.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner (1986) provides an ecological systems framework that was used to examine the school support system to improve students with diverse learning needs' achievement in international schools in Egypt. Ecological systems theory (EST) explains the relationships among the different stakeholders on the school level. Furthermore, the networked model shows the overlapping, interconnected social interactions involving a focal individual. Neal and Neal (2013) considered the multitude of social system interactions and patterns of interactions an individual encounters, directly and indirectly, illuminating a complex network of factors and processes within different connected environmental systems. In this study, the social interactions among the networked ecological layers were explained by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977).

A Needs Assessment Investigation

The purpose of the needs assessment study was to investigate factors that influenced the school support system of students with diverse learning needs in two Egyptian international schools. The needs assessment study attempted to examine the three ecological layers of the

school system (e.g., national policy, school leadership, and teachers' practices). Three different methods of data collection were used to conduct the needs assessment study: Teachers' Survey of Practices with Students of Varying Needs (SOP) survey, owner and school principal in-person surveys, a semi-structured interview with policy advisers, and a focus group interview with a group of teachers. The findings from this exploratory mixed method needs assessment study were used to conduct additional research to develop an inclusive leadership intervention designed to improve systemic support for academic diversity in the international schools in Egypt.

The participants in the needs assessment study revealed that a positive attitude toward inclusive practice exists; however, teachers lack the on-the-job training needed to serve students with diverse learning needs. Also, teachers reported their frustration due to the lack of administrative support for academic diversity. School principal's workload and school duties do not support their role as instructional transformational leaders for academic diversity. Additionally, the school vision for academic diversity is absent. Finally, the policy advisers reported the absence of an implementation plan to support academic diversity.

Synthesis of Relevant Research Literature

The literature review for the proposed intervention examined current western professional development programs for inclusive leadership. The focus on western programs was necessary due to the absence of literature on inclusive leadership training in Egypt. Besides, these western programs provide unique insights into intervention designs. Different leadership styles were examined to support inclusive leadership (e.g., authentic, transformational, and shared leadership). In addition to professional development programs for inclusive education, this literature review discussed principal preparation, standards, and collaboration for academic

diversity. Several education systems of support were discussed (e.g., differentiated instruction, Multi-tiered Systems of Support [MTSS], Response to Intervention [RTI], and Schoolhouse Model). The Star Model proposed a five-core principles framework of the preparation program curriculum for responsive school leaders. The Star Model offers a conceptual foundation for preparation programs and infused courses that develop school leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions, to ensure legally fair decisions and meaningful instruction in inclusive schools (Crockett, 2002).

Research Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of an inclusive leadership intervention on school leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions about inclusive leadership, and on their understanding of how to implement school support systems based on a tiered system of support. The study also investigated the leaders' perceptions of authentic leadership for academic diversity, to expand upon currently limited research on inclusive leadership. This study was guided by the following research questions, including both process and outcome questions.

Research Questions

RQ1: What was the delivered inclusive leadership training and to what extent was it implemented with fidelity?

RQ2: What were the school leaders' experiences related to completing inclusive leadership training?

RQ3: To what extent does the inclusive leadership intervention improve the school leader's knowledge and skills about inclusive education principles and practices?

RQ4: What are the school leaders' perceptions about authentic leadership?

Research Design

This university-based inclusive leadership intervention used a convergent parallel design with a mixed-method research approach to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention. This exploratory mixed-method research design collected and concurrently triangulated quantitive and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative data in this study were collected using participant's scores on a pre-and post-Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test, Authentic Leadership Questionnaire, and Learner Instruction Evaluation Form. The qualitative data were collected using field notes, focus group interviews, and reflective logs.

Intervention

The development of a university-led inclusive leadership intervention aimed at supporting school leaders and educators by providing the knowledge, competencies, and dispositions needed to design and implement inclusive systems and programs for students with diverse learning needs through completion of inclusive leadership coursework and a PLC that is driven by analysis of administrative dilemmas.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected and analyzed simultaneously following the convergent mixed methods design. The statistical analyses included descriptive and inferential statistics and paired sample t-tests. For qualitative data, the researcher employed a thematic coding approach. The quantitative and qualitative data were separately analyzed and then they were analyzed together, searching for areas of triangulation of significant themes and trends.

Findings

According to the participants, support from the school's system is absent. The school leaders' knowledge and competencies are not adequate to implement a school support system for academic diversity. The intervention revealed the lack of understanding regarding authentic

transformational leadership traits and styles, which support building an inclusive community. Knowledge of authentic transformational leadership supports the skills needed to collaborate with others. However, the participants' results indicated that the least developed authentic leadership subskills are transparency and balanced processing. Additionally, principal standards must support academic diversity. Therefore, standard-based inclusive principal preparation programs must support school leaders' inclusive knowledge, competencies, and dispositions to design evidence-based support systems for students with diverse learning needs. Evidence-based courses about inclusion and academic in general professional educator diplomas are recommended to support the job demands of today's teachers and students' needs.

Furthermore, participants revealed their dissatisfaction with teachers' qualifications to support academic diversity. Teaching qualifications reflected the necessity to enhance their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support all students. Infused courses or targeted workshops must include various topics about the inclusive learning environment and supporting students with diverse learning needs such as identification, differentiation for academic diversity, co-teaching and collaboration, and professional learning communities for academic diversity. Furthermore, dual certification is recommended for both general and special education teachers.

In conclusion, this small, mixed methods study offered an opportunity to support inclusive school leaders in Egyptian international schools. While the results may not be generalizable to other private and public schools system, critical information was collected about school leaders' experiences. This study offers evidence for the importance of inclusive principal preparation and development programs leading the change in their educational setting for academic diversity and students' achievement.

Chapter One

Academic Diversity in Inclusive Education

Today's classrooms have witnessed an increased variation in students' background, language proficiency, culture, academic skills, and interests (Parsons, Dodman, & Burrowbridge, 2013). In the research literature, these students are often referred to as students with diverse learning needs (Tomlinson et al., 2003). A Council of Chief State School Officers' report (CCSSO, 2012) defined academically diverse learners as "students with learning differences are those who, because of gender, language, cultural background, differing ability levels, disabilities, learning approaches, and socioeconomic status, may have academic needs that require varied instructional strategies to ensure their learning" (p. 21). Furthermore, Tomlinson et al. (2003) argued that students with diverse learning needs are students with identified learning difficulties and highly advanced learners; they vary widely in their level of abilities, interests, and preferred modes of learning. Falling far from their grade-level norms or exceeding expectations, students with diverse learning needs may require a specific set of accommodations, modifications, or enrichment plans to support their academic performance at grade/ ability levels (Crowne, 2008; Van Tassel-Baska & Brown, 2007).

To best meet students' diverse academic and behavioral needs, global initiatives and governments have exerted recognizable efforts to identify and address the complexity of current educational settings (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015). To meet the needs of all learners, the provision of an inclusive learning environment has become the focus of most academic programs throughout the world (UNESCO, 1994; UNESCO, 2015). In general, inclusive education refers to an education system's structure that supports the academic and behavioral development of all students, regardless of disabilities or differences (e.g., gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and language), to enable

them to thrive in academic and extra-curricular activities and to meet the social expectations of the school together with their classmates (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; UNESCO, 1994; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2016). A quality inclusive learning environment results in better behavioral and academic outcomes, social relationships, high school graduation rates, and post-school success for all children, at a lower cost than special or segregated education (Choi, Meisenheimer, McCart, & Sailor, 2017; International Disability and Development Consortium [IDDC], 2016; Rojewski, Lee, & Gregg, 2015; Woodman, Smith, Greenberg, & Mailick, 2016). The current study focuses on students with learning difficulties as well as gifted students, as defined in detail in the coming paragraphs.

Students with learning difficulties (LD) are students with average to above-average intelligence. Their processing of information is affected by specific neurological functioning difficulties, which can negatively impact their learning process (Woodcock & Hitches, 2017). According to the US Department of Education and Department of Health (2015), LD affects one or more specific areas of learning (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia). Evidence-based and targeted interventions may address students' strengths and needs by using specialist equipment and technology.

According to the National Association for Gifted Children, students with advanced cognitive abilities and achievement may need to be offered opportunities for enrichment and acceleration as they may already have mastered the curriculum designed for their age peers (Brody, 2004). In 1972, Marland's educational commission offered the first formal definition of giftedness. Gifted students have an outstanding aptitude and/or performance in one or more of the following domains: a) academic and intellectual abilities, b) leadership ability, c) visual and performing arts, and d) creative or productive thinking (Marland, 1972).

In western literature, several practices and educational models have been developed to accommodate all students in the mainstream (e.g., differentiated instruction, Multi-tiered Systems of Support [MTSS], and Response to Intervention [RTI]) (Santamaria, 2009). Teachers learn to effectively implement different inclusive practices to support all students in their classrooms, such as differentiating instruction and choosing appropriate curricular models and instructional strategies (Borders, Woodley, & Moore, 2014). Differentiated instruction is the response of the teacher to the students' needs as guided by three principles: a respectful task, flexible grouping, and on-going assessment and adjustment (Tomlinson, 2001). Teachers may differentiate instruction through content, process, or product. With suitable support, including differentiated instruction, students ranging from gifted to those with significant disabilities can receive an appropriate education in general education classrooms. MTSS is a framework to improve teaching and learning for all students in regular classrooms, through a cross-functional team that plans for, monitors, and evaluates both the academic and behavioral needs of students (Giangreco & Suter, 2015). Based on new insights from the learning sciences and creative uses of digital technologies, RTI is a multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavioral needs. This support system ensures high-quality learning opportunities and universal screening of all learners through intervention and acceleration (Brown-Chidsey, & Steege, 2011; Van Der Heyden,Witt, & Gilbertson, 2007). The previous paragraphs highlighted the definitions of students with diverse learning needs, inclusive learning environments, and educational systems and models that support the students' learning process which paved the way to introduce the role of leadership in inclusive school settings. The coming section focuses on the role of leadership in supporting an inclusive learning environment.

In the U.S., inclusive educational laws (e.g., No Child Left Behind and Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act) require inclusive leaders for successful implementation (Galloway & Isimaru, 2015; Polizzi & Frick, 2012). School leadership is a powerful predictor of positive teacher attitudes in schools as they implement inclusive education practices (DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran, & Walther-Thomas, 2017). Inclusive leadership is defined in western research as (a) focusing on differentiation of instruction; (b) coaching teachers and specialists; (c) providing suitable professional development; and (d) allowing on-going collaborative opportunities between specialists and educator (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007). Furthermore, Cottrill, Lopez, and Hoffman (2014) concluded that organizations can transform inclusive environments through authentic leadership. Through observation of the inclusive leader's behavior, the staff perceives the competence displayed by the leaders and imitates and models the inclusive behavior (Boekhorst, 2014). An inclusive community starts with a shared vision among all stakeholders to build the capacity to accommodate all students or enrich and accelerate their learning (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Hehir & Katzman, 2013; Villa & Thousands, 2016).

In the following section, the rationale for the proposed study is presented, through an examination of the emerging inclusive learning environment in Egypt. Despite the availability of a legislative foundation, research on inclusive education remains almost non-existent in Egypt (Crabtree & Williams, 2013) and is complicated by the lack of a clear definition of inclusive education and the absence of evidence-based models (Gaad, 2011). Additionally, school leaders and teachers receive no formal training on policies and procedures, whether from the training centers supported by the Ministry of Education (MOE) or other sources, to support an inclusive learning environment for all students (Mohamed, 2006).

Problem of Practice

The Egyptian government has attempted to support academic diversity as a part of the global movement of inclusion (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the subsequent issuance of the Dakar Framework for Action at the World Education Forum (UNESCO, 2000) called upon countries to develop inclusive education systems with a high-quality education for all learners (National Centre for Educational Research and Development [NCERD], 2014). Equal education for students with disabilities is affirmed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). It was the "first comprehensive" international treaty on people with disabilities, having been preceded by seven treaties (between 1948-1990), according to The United Nations Human Rights Treaty System, and was ratified by Egypt in 2006 (UNCRPD, 2006, art. 24, para. 1). Aligned with the global inclusion initiatives, the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt (2014) affirmed the right of students to access appropriate educational opportunities, both for students with learning disabilities as well as for gifted students (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, art. 81 & 82, 2014). Inclusive Ministerial Decree No. 42 of 2015 set criteria for admission of students with mild disabilities in public education schools. Inclusive education statements are available for all students with IQ 65-84 who have one type of mild disability, including mild vision and hearing disabilities, mild to moderate physical and mobility disabilities, and mild intellectual disabilities (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2015). In 2020, the MOE with UNICEF published three different documents which may support an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2020). However, little to no formal documentation or evaluation of translations of the above-mentioned Ministerial Decree and policies have been put into practice in Egyptian public or private schools, although

there have been some fragmented attempts at implementation (Parnell, 2017). Also, there was no mention of inclusive services provided to students with typical IQ, which is between 85-115, and specific learning difficulties or high abilities in Egyptian public schools.

Governmental efforts have emerged to support Egyptian gifted and talented students (MOE, 2014; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2015). According to Ministerial Decree No. 369 (2011), the Egyptian government declared its plan to improve and enrich high school curricula by implementing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to provide innovative educational opportunities for advanced students. Through using empirical research and project-based learning experiences, STEM education nurtures gifted students' critical thinking and research skills, promoting 21st-century learning skills, and connecting students to their community's economic needs and the labor market (Abd El Aziz, 2013; AbdelMaguid, 2017; Elfarargy, 2016; Office of Inspector General, 2018).

Educational reform and policies in Egypt mainly focus on the public sector, leaving gaps related to international schools. Public schools represent almost 90% of the total number of Egyptian schools (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics [CAPMAS], 2018). According to a recent report issued by PricewaterhouseCoopers Egypt (PwC) in April 2019, the private sector (e.g., private experimental, private language, and international) included 10% of the total enrollment of students for the academic year 2016-2017 (PwC, 2019). Education in private language schools continues to take place, chiefly in English or French (OECD, 2015). The Ministry of Education policies are aimed chiefly at public schools, they implicitly cover all pre-university schools in Egypt, as all schools fall under their purview. The MOE controls virtually all pre-university schools in at least three ways: (a) initial licensure of the school; (b) all

Egyptians must take three subjects in Arabic (e.g., Arabic Language Arts, social studies, and religious studies); and (c) the private (foreign) language schools are responsible for obtaining accreditation from a relevant international body. Exemption of the previously mentioned requirements are given to a very few numbers of Embassy-related international schools that other countries provide for their nationals; these are supervised by protocols arranged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Wealthier Egyptian families educate their children in the growing number of private and language schools, as high-tuition schools have become a prerequisite for obtaining a well-paying job.

Egypt has focused on promoting inclusive education through a commitment to the directives of the international community since the Jomtien Conference (1990) that started the Education for All (EFA) initiative. The principles contained in EFA were emphasized in the Salamanca Statement (1994), the Dakar Forum (2000), the Declaration of Millennium Development Goals (NCERD, 2014), and the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt (2014). Also, results from small-scale projects in several Egyptian schools in Cairo and Sohag (an Egyptian Governorate in Upper (southern) Egypt) underline the potential for a successful inclusive model in Egypt. Yet the slow pace at which the number of inclusive schools is being created is concerning (Sayed-Ahmed, 2016; Shenouda, 2017). The minimal evidence of improvement underscores the urgent need for examination of barriers, analysis of needs, and the development of a corresponding action plan as it relates to the implementation of inclusive practices in Egypt (OECD, 2015).

Moving away from the national policy, several barriers limit educational opportunities for all students at the school level. First, gaps are found in the instructional transformational role of school leaders with inclusive backgrounds to support students (OECD, 2015). Second, the lack

of a collaborative and reflective culture is also considered a barrier to support teaching and learning opportunities for students in Egypt (Johnson, Monk, and Swain, 2000; Badran & Toprak, 2020). Third, professional development programs for educators and leaders to support the differentiated instruction model are limited (Alkhateeb, Hadidi, & Alkhateeb, 2016; Ghoneim 2014; Sayed-Ahmed, 2016). Consequently, Egyptian school administrators lack an adequate understanding of students' personal and educational needs (OECD, 2015). Furthermore, Egyptian teachers use outdated traditional teaching methods; teaching-to-the-test is the dominant teaching method to support students' learning performance and teaching and learning opportunities (Badran & Toprak, 2020; Hargreaves, 1997; Hargreaves, 2001; Sobhy, 2012). High-stakes examinations and the rigidity of the curriculum limit the opportunity for connecting knowledge to a real-life situation and for developing students' cognitive and thinking skills (OECD, 2015). This situation limits the implementation of research-based pedagogical practices and strategies targeting students with diverse learning needs (Mohamed, 2006; OECD, 2015).

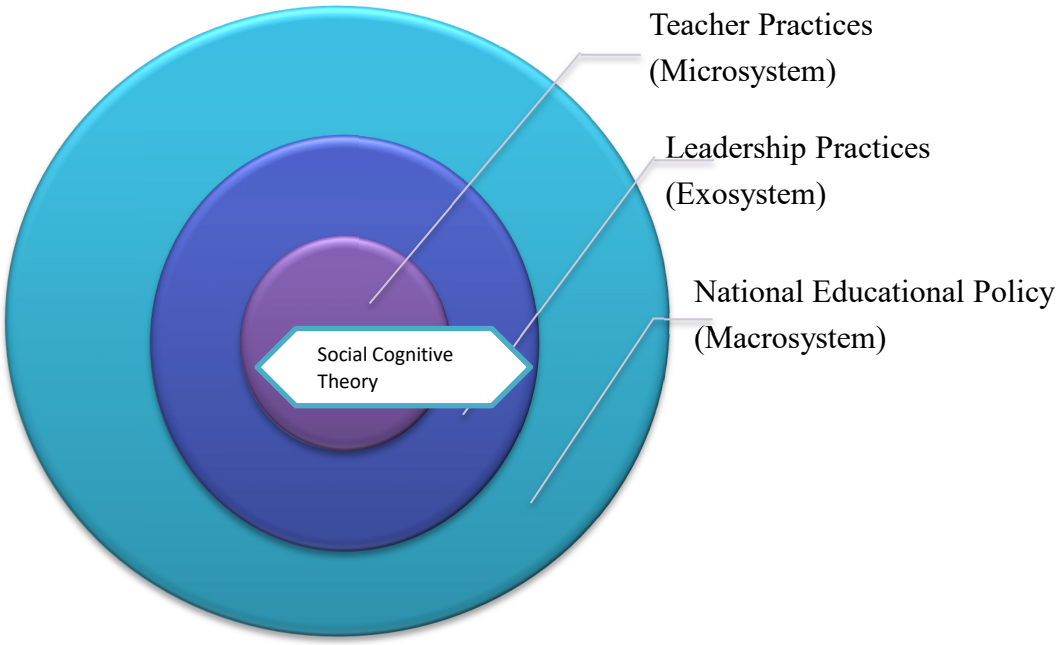
The study's problem of practice focuses on the school leaders and educators who face barriers when attempting to provide high-quality academic programs to support the academic achievement of students with diverse learning needs in Egyptian schools. The barriers to establishing an inclusive learning environment may include how national policies are translated into practice, leadership preparation programs and practices, and teachers' pedagogical methods. In the absence of adequate documented attention to this point about Egypt, and due to the lack of access to research public schools, the coming section borrows a theoretical framework from western literature and investigates the underlying causes of the problem of practice in international school settings in Egypt.

Systems Approaches and Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner (1986) offers an ecological systems framework that may be used to examine the scholastic support provided to students with diverse learning needs in international schools in Egypt. The ecological systems theory (EST) focuses on environmental influences to develop a contextual model which explains the central role played by the environment in academically diverse learner development. EST identifies contextual analytics, or points of intervention, that lie beyond the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The five nested concentric systems include: (a) microsystem; (b) mesosystem; (c) exosystem; (d) macrosystem; and (e) chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) (see Figure 1.1). The present study focuses on the support system provided by school leaders for differentiated instructional practices used by teachers, to enhance the learning of students with diverse learning needs.

Figure 1. 1

Nested Model of Ecological Systems



Note. Each level is situated within the next and centered on a focal student. Adapted from "The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design," by U. Bronfenbrenner, 1979. Copyright 1976 by Harvard Press. Social Cognitive Theory is adapted from Bandura (1979).

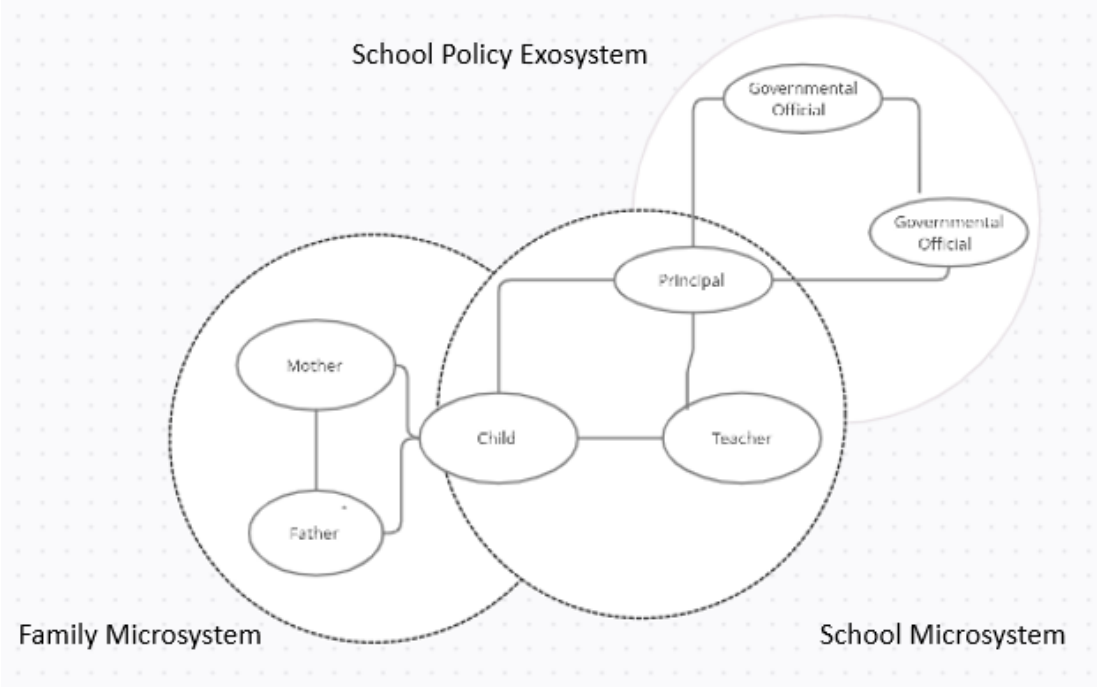
Bronfenbrenner's framework can inform the study's goal, as follows. Teachers' pedagogical practices (microsystem) are supported by the school's leadership style (exosystem) and influenced by inclusive national educational policies (macrosystem). Through social interactions and networking among the three nested systems, students with diverse needs may be adequately served and supported (Neal & Neal, 2013). Bronfenbrenner's EST presents a theoretical framework to enhance the understanding of the factors contributing to the current gap in practices of academic diversity in Egyptian international schools. Teachers are at the center of the educational environment. The microsystem involves the immediate surroundings that encompass teachers throughout the school day. The mesosystem is concerned with the

interactions between the structures of the microsystem. An example of the mesosystem is the administrative meetings of school leaders and administrators, which focus on the teachers without their direct involvement. The exosystem acts as a societal layer that indirectly affects the teacher. The school-level policies and professional learning communities are examples of the exosystem that could have a negative or a positive impact on the teacher's development. The macrosystem involves laws and cultural ideologies within a certain society. The chronosystem reflects the historical perspective and changes that take place during a certain period. The macrosystem and chronosystem influence social interactions that outline settings (Neal & Neal, 2013).

The seminal work of Simmel (1955) and Bronfenbrenner's (1986) EST inform the examination of the relationship between the individual and the environment (Neal & Neal, 2013). Neal and Neal's (2013) networked model (Figure 2.1) focuses on the social intersection among the individuals who belong to the same ecological system. Their model highlights overlapping ecological systems, offering a different structure than Bronfenbrenner's nested theory, to better explain the networked social relationships surrounding a focal individual. This interaction between the contextual systems and the focal individual is not well-described by the concentric nested circles, whereas social networks help to capture the complexity of leaders and teacher development and needs (Neal & Neal, 2013).

Figure 1. 2

Example of a Networked Model of Ecological Systems



Note. The child is at the center of the microsystems at home and at school. Social interactions take place between the student and his/her teacher in class and another form of social interaction happens between the teacher and the school principal. The mesosystem indicates collaboration and the developmental dialogue between the teacher and the school, principal. The Exosystem includes the school leaders and the district and ministry of education officials who indirectly have an impact on the child's achievement and development. Adapted from "Nested or networked? Future Directions for Ecological Systems Theory" by J. W. Neal and Z. P. Neal, 2013, Social Development, 22, p. 728 Copyright 2013 by Wiley-Blackwell.

The following paragraphs examine the nature of the social interactions existing among teachers and between teachers and school leaders as explained by social cognitive theory and emotional intelligence (EI). Understanding our behavior and that of others through effective navigation of the social environment is one of the principles of social cognitive theory. Bandura explained the continuous reciprocal interaction among one's behavior, cognition, and environment that influences the bi-directional social interaction among individuals in the same

society (Bandura, 1977). This reciprocal interaction is also affected by one's self-efficacy beliefs; Bandura defines self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed at tasks. Effective performance requires both skills and one's belief in one's abilities to do the tasks. Consequently, social interactions within the environment may be affected by one's self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura indicated that individuals with a high level of self-efficacy endure task difficulties and succeed, as they can manage their emotions, and they are motivated and less stressed (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy beliefs influence task choice, effort, persistence, resilience, and achievement (Bandura, 1997). The social cognitive self-regulating construct (e.g., motivation, goal setting, and self-evaluation) overlaps with one's emotional capacities to regulate emotions and control one's behavior (Martinez-Pons, 2000). Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy play important roles in helping individuals to achieve success in a given society' (e.g., monetary success, social success, or another type of success) (Gharetepeh, et al., 2015). A connection between social cognitive theory and EI appears to promote diversity in a given society (Behjat & Chowdhury, 2012).

School principals who support inclusive education and practices need to develop a high level of EI (Precey, 2011). EI can be defined as an "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). In 1998, Daniel Goleman set out a framework of EI that reflects how an individual's potential for mastering the skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management translate into on-the-job success. Fullan (2001) stated, "in a culture of change, emotions frequently run high" (p.74), and added that developing their emotional intelligence, creating successful relationships, and leading change will be the responsibility of all future principals. Raising self-awareness and

self-regulation of leaders and followers is a critical step toward inclusive leadership practices (Boekhorst, 2015; Dow, 2017).

The concept of observational learning from the behavior of others was contained in Bandura's 1977 book, "Social Learning Theory". Bandura explained how leaders can shape the organizational climate by being role models for their followers. Through observation of leaders' actions and thoughts, followers recognized their leaders' behaviors as the accepted organizational norms (Bandura, 1989). Followers modeled their leaders' behavior for development and career advancement (Grojean, Resick, Dickson, & Smith, 2004). For example, school principals act as role models for staff; they inspire the staff by exhibiting inclusive behaviors in the specific school context. This type of interaction can build an inclusive environment among staff that recognizes differences and diversity (Villa & Thousands, 2016).

Moreover, Nesbit (2012) argued that the development of self-directed leadership development requires the leader to have a high level of self-awareness, to assess their weaknesses and strengths, and to design their professional goals accordingly. Self-directed refers to one's ability to manage emotional reactions to feedback, to carry out effectively the practice of self-reflection, and to enact self-regulatory processes for development (Nesbit, 2012). Self-directed leaders develop a strong understanding that behavior functions within a threefold mutual relationship, connecting cognition, behavior, and the environment (Bandura, 1993). Moreover, self-directed leaders can manage social capital and resources for appropriate implementation and outcomes.

Hallinger (2005) offered an argument that Egyptian scholars may consider when examining the leadership styles that support academic diversity. Instructional leadership and transformational leadership are two conceptual models that are the most suitable for the current

evolving trends of educational reform such as empowerment, shared leadership, and organizational learning (Hallinger, 2003). While instructional leadership is more focused on the principal as an authority figure, transformational leadership builds the organization's capacity to select its purposes and to support changes to practices of teaching and learning. Hallinger (2005) concluded that leadership preparation should move toward shared instructional leadership.

Waldron, McLeskey, and Redd (2011) conducted a mixed-method study to examine leadership in an inclusive setting school. The researchers reported that the school is governed by the whole school's shared vision and shared data-driven decisions, highlighting the collaboration between the principal and teachers. The study indicated that building teachers' capacity is a key requirement. According to school documents, the school has a high incidence of students with learning disabilities; however, the school's scores on the state tests were high. The role of the school principal was examined through observation, staff interview data, and school document analysis. Waldron et al. (2011) concluded that leadership accountability helped students with disabilities and those who struggle to meet state standards. The triangulated data highlighted five themes, describing a style of leadership shared between the principal and teachers. Shared leadership has the power to set the school's direction; redesign and transform the school's organization; improve working conditions for school staff; provide high-quality professional development; and ensure that data are used to drive decision-making. Shared leadership practices influence organizational and instructional improvement (Harris & Spillane, 2008). They enhance student outcomes while developing the leaders of the future (Bush & Glover, 2014). The distribution of leadership contributes to an effective inclusive educational program for academically diverse learners through a shared vision and collaborative decisions (DeMatthews, 2015a; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Wallace, 2013).

Unfortunately, there are no Egyptian professional development programs designed to fit this leadership profile. The role of transformational and inclusive leadership is absent from the professional development programs and educational leaders' standards in Egypt. National and private institutes for leadership training need to be responsive to the on-job training needs of leaders and teachers (Badran & Toprak, 2020). The coming section focuses on the factors contributing to the barriers facing academic diversity in Egypt.

Underlying Factors Related to Educational Leadership Barriers in Egypt

The literature review examines the underlying factors that contribute to the barriers facing school leaders in the Egyptian context. Egyptian school leaders face challenges when attempting to implement a support system for academic diversity in international schools. Three ecological systems serve to frame the literature review: national policies (macrosystem), educational leadership (exosystem), and teachers' practices (microsystem) in international schools in Egypt.

National Pre-university Policies in Egypt

The MOE issued two, consecutive national long-term strategic plans, in 2007 and 2014, that guide the educational system’s development and capacity building for all students. The Strategic Plan for Pre-university Education in Egypt (2007-2012) set a strategic goal to ensure a high-quality education for all learners, including those with learning difficulties and gifted students, in an inclusive school environment (MOE, 2007; UNESCO, 2015). Despite encouraging developments and good intentions, the translation from policy to sustainable, effective inclusive practice has remained fragmented and elusive across Egypt, falling far short of targeted goals (MOE, 2014). Criticism was directed at this policy, including that the policy’s goals were overly ambitious with too many priorities, and this extensive agenda hindered the

government's ability to execute focused and effective interventions (OECD, 2015). This complexity limited the government's governance and support plans. Moreover, the implementation plan was lengthy and unclear. The policy offered no risk assessment, contingency plans, or piloting process against technical problems or political resistance. This condition wasted financial and human resources (OECD, 2015). Seven years later, the MOE's Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education (2014-2030) included sections to support special and gifted education. The policy included in this plan still calls for teacher and leadership preparation to support the educational needs of students with a special scholastic profile (MOE, 2014).

The current wave of calls for changes in teacher training and leadership preparation first appeared in the National Strategic Plan for Pre-university Education Reform (2007). According to Article 75, Law 139 (1981, last modification on June 20, 2007), the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) would provide licenses for teachers, trainers, and evaluators as well as give accreditation to professional development programs and agencies (MOE, 2007). Unfortunately, the PAT empowerment model for teachers' training has shifted into testing and control instead of mainly focusing on accrediting professional development programs and licensing teachers (Zaalouk, 2013). Despite an emphasis on mentoring and coaching models to support teachers' development, the lack of preparation for competent mentors and coaches persists as a major long-term challenge for all involved with or responsible for teachers' professional development in Egypt (OECD, 2015).

Although the PAT law mandates the enhancement of professionalism of teachers and school leadership, no national standards for leadership preparation and professional development were issued or discussed (OECD, 2015). The standards for school leadership and principals' preparation and practices are underdeveloped in Egypt. Egyptian school leaders reported their

dissatisfaction with training, as “they were not convinced of the importance of [the] teacher training opportunities that took place every 5 years” (NCERD, 2014, p. 163). Based on the gap in the national standards, the need to create and implement educators and educational leaders' preparation programs to support services for academic diversity is evident (AlKhateeb et al., 2016; Gaad, 2011; Ghoneim, 2014). The 2014 plan (i.e., the 2030 educational plan for Egypt, based on the 2014 update to the Millennium Development Goals) has been significantly altered by the on-going technology-based reform of the pre-university system, led by Minister Tarek Shawky. PAT has basically been superseded by alternative initiatives which are going forward although it had been leading (and legal) policy since 2007 (UNICEF, 2019).

Aligned with the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, the Egyptian Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), referred to as Vision 2030, was developed to improve economic, social, and environmental conditions in Egypt (The Sustainable Development Strategy Report, 2016). The Ministry of Education and Technical Education launched its strategy for transforming education in Egypt with a promise to adopt a program for integrating slightly disabled students in schools and another support program for distinguished and talented students (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, 2018). Furthermore, the new strategy promised a high-quality inclusive education system for all, in accordance with international standards and new technologies. The new Curriculum 2.0 was developed to gradually cover all subjects from Kindergarten[1] to Grade12. This curriculum is intended to be evidence-based and focused on new trends and teaching and learning principles to enhance all the achievement of all students. The development of Curriculum 2.0 has been the beginning of a complete development process that starts from pre-primary to the end of the secondary stage,

[1] It should be noted that pre-primary (pre-school and kindergarten) are not compulsory under the current system.

which provides a comprehensive vision of what a pre-university graduate should achieve by 2030 (UNICEF, 2019). As previously mentioned, the MOE and UNICEF issued three key strategic references around inclusive and special education (e.g., The Special Education Curriculum Frameworks, Guidelines for the Adaptation and Accommodation of Learning Materials for the Children with Sensory Disabilities, and the Teachers Guide on Inclusive Education), all developed to enhance the Education 2.0. reform (UNICEF, 2020).

The previously mentioned national policies are essential to achieving the promised first-order change in the Egyptian landscape. However, to restructure the system for institutionalized systematic change, Leithwood (1994) pointed out that a second-order change requires a form of leadership that develops a shared vision, creates constructive work cultures, implements distribution of leadership to others, and leads the change by stakeholders. The coming sections examine the different stakeholders' (i.e., leaders and teachers) roles and perspectives regarding change.

Educational Leadership in Egyptian Schools

At the exosystem level, school leadership represents the middle level between national policies and classroom practices. Egypt recognizes the importance of training and professional development for educational leaders who are essential for educational reform (MOE, 2007). According to the National Strategic Plan of Pre-university Education (2007-2012) and (2014-2030), the instructional leader is responsible for the teaching and learning approaches at public and private schools (MOE, 2007).

This section describes the current school leadership situation in the Egyptian context in terms of inadequate leadership preparation programs and outdated management systems. The situation of school leaders in Egypt is investigated as one of the underlying reasons for

inadequate academic diversity support on the school level. The situation is identified as follows: (a) a gap in principal's instructional transformational leadership, (b) a lack of leadership capacity building, and (c) a gap in collaborative opportunities among stakeholders to support teaching and learning opportunities for all students (OECD, 2015).

In Egypt, the principal is responsible for all administrative issues that concern teacher attendance, punctuality, and classroom management, among other managerial tasks (Abdou, 2012; MOE, 2014; OECD, 2015). MOE educational supervisors, who are experienced content-area teachers, are responsible for daily instructions in their specific content area in public schools; they have a direct relationship with MOE, and they are responsible for designing the semester exams for grades other than 6, 8, and 12. Exams are written by relevant senior teachers and submitted to the district supervisor of the relevant content. However, in international schools, heads of stage and heads of the department carry this instructional load as well. The principal's managerial role potentially limits the effective pedagogical discourse with teachers (Hammad, 2010a; OECD, 2015). The lack of effective communication between teachers and school leaders negatively affects opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership progress among staff (Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller, 2015). Consequently, the gap in collaborative opportunities among the different stakeholders leads to inappropriate provisional decisions concerning students with diverse learning needs' placement and services in Egyptian international schools.

Although the current national educational policy highlights the state's responsibilities toward the educational needs of academically diverse students, the implementation process is still unclear (MOE, 2007; MOE, 2014). To better understand how the mandates contained in the Egyptian Pre-university Strategic Plans (2007, 2014) are translated into practice, the present

study examined the limited preparation programs for educational leaders. No inclusive leadership preparation programs were found to support the instructional leadership role for an inclusive school principal in the Egyptian market. Preparation programs ignored the role of instructional leadership in the implementation of policies for academically diverse students (Mohamed, 2006; OECD, 2015).

In addition to the professional development and training dilemma in Egypt, decentralization is also a concern for Egyptian educational leadership. Ibrahim and Hozayin (2006) examined the history of educational decentralization in Egypt, from 1883 to 1979. The challenges they found include the lack of a positive attitude to shared authority and responsibility, the imbalance of authority, and the dominance of the central representative over the rest of the members. Additionally, raising public awareness is a key strategy to support decentralization in the Egyptian educational landscape (Ibrahim and Hozayin, 2006). The authors recommended different key aspects to strengthen decentralization in Egypt: 1) financial decentralization; 2) positive attitudes toward decentralization; 3) professional development and training; 4) criteria for selection of participants, and 5) a framework of accountability and transparency. School-level management lacks the strategic and operational readiness to successfully manage curriculum, materials, resources, and finance seems to have obstructed the achievement of decentralization goals (Badran & Toprak, 2020).

In Egypt, the school administration lacks shared authority and decision-making power with stakeholders (OECD, 2015). Lack of decentralization is a long-standing hindrance to progress in school-level development. According to Ministerial Decree No. 334 (2006), the school administration and all stakeholders must collaborate in the decision-making process within a democratic environment at the school level in the form of a Board of Trustees (BOT)

(Ginsburg, Megahed, Elmeski, & Tanaka, 2010; Hammad, 2010b). Each BOT involves thirteen members, including the headteacher, five parents, five community members, and two teachers selected from among the General Assembly (Hammad, 2010b). The decree explained the power, accountability, and responsibilities of the school boards, principals, and community at the school level to support student achievement (MOE, 2007). Hammad (2010b) examined the perception of 85 school leaders and teachers in nine secondary schools in the Damietta governorate (in northern Egypt). The results indicate that the structures do not necessarily make shared decision-making happen. The participants describe the BOT as a superficial and 'rhetorical' authority with no genuine improvement and no trust in the school administration. Having external BOT members with no educational background impeded appropriate decisions (Hammad, 2010b). Educational decentralization has had an ambiguous and statistically insignificant effect on student outcomes (Nasser-Ghodsi, 2006).

The reorganization of BOT, based on Ministerial Decree No. 289 of 2011, was an attempt to improve the educational process and overcome its challenges by fostering cooperation between parents and teachers (MOE, 2011). However, a recent study (Rizk, 2018) explored the BOT's opportunities for participation and impact, as well as the challenges that revealed different attitudes toward the structure and process of BOT in Egypt. The results showed that some respondents saw the BOT as a golden chance to bring communities, families, and experts closer to schools and to develop an environment of trust and support for those schools from their local communities (UNESCO, 2008). Other participants reported that BOT has "pseudo participation" where the focus is on activities related to supervision of school activities and resource mobilization. Rizk (2018) highlighted its low impact and the challenges that hinder the effective implementation of BOTs in Egypt (i.e., scaling-up failure, the lack of effectiveness, the lack of

incentives and monitoring, and the lack of awareness). The MOE failed to provide a pilot study before the implementation of this western model in the Egyptian context, with little attention to cultural and contextual differences. The BOT was an attempt to re-purpose the long-standing parent-teacher associations that had existed at each school for decades. However, these associations were arguably also western-model organizations injected into the Egyptian context. Additionally, the study highlighted the lack of clear regulations and organization, support, and governance from the MOE, as well as a lack of capacity building of all stakeholders to carry on the BOT activities and plan successfully (Rizk, 2018).

The authoritarian MOE actions and the absence of the people's right to participate in public initiatives promote centralization and lack of decision-making power (Kandil, 2013). The MOE monopolizes the education system with a security framework, impeding the public, unions, and non-governmental organizations from participating in the reform process. Education is considered a national security matter (Sayed, 2006). Parents and community members cannot hold a public meeting without the approval of the local authority. In a collectivistic culture like Egypt, people are characterized by being less assertive and confrontational and accepting an imbalanced power distribution among society. The community accepts imbalanced authority, power differentials, status privileges, and social inequality (Elsaid & Elsaid, 2012; House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002).

Teachers' Practices in Egyptian Schools

In Egyptian schools, teachers' professional development is problematic for several reasons. First, most teachers are not certified (Badran & Toprak, 2020); and they receive low-quality and meaningless training that is poorly implemented (OECD, 2015). Teacher training programs lack a comprehensive vision, with issues in programs organization and inefficiency of

the required practicum (Zaalouk, 2013). As a result of the inadequate preparation, the MOE educational supervisors do not trust teachers to lead development in their schools. Consequently, teachers have minimal decision-making power or influence to support education (Ibrahim 2010; Sayed, 2006).

Second, poverty and economic scarcity have an impact on teachers' motivation and school improvement in public schools. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in Egypt is projected to remain elevated at 27% (using the international poverty line of US$ 3.20) and could rise further (World Bank, 2020). According to the hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943), teachers in relatively poor countries like Egypt are more focused on satisfying their physiological needs (i.e., food, shelter) than working toward their self-actualization (Pyne, 2019). Haberman (1991) describes teachers' motivation and cognitive abilities in what he called a pedagogy of poverty. Teachers experience a cognitive tunnel where they are hyper-focused on one aspect of their environment and ignore other aspects. Teachers become single-minded when managing resources, which limits their ability to be creative in the classroom. Furthermore, stress and anxiety that characterize the school environment can lead to impulsive actions and low self-control (Haberman, 2010).

Third, the dynamic of the classrooms is authoritarian and directive (Sayed, 2006). Ritualization, rote memorization, and high-stakes examination are prevalent in the Egyptian educational system (Hargreaves, 1997; OECD, 2015). Egyptian education is portrayed as undemocratic, teacher-centered, highly competitive, and authoritarian (Korany, 2012; Sayed, 2006). The students' greatest concern is to store and maintain information to succeed on the test; it is a highly test-based educational system (Hargreaves, 1997; Hargreaves, 2001). In such a

learning environment, students control, manage and shape the behavior of their teachers. Students reward teachers by complying, and they punish them by resisting (Haberman, 2010).

To elaborate on the teaching practices in Egypt, Johnson, Monk, and Swain (2000) investigated Egyptian teachers' practices in science classrooms. Most teachers reported using the teacher-based approach method of teaching, where teachers are the center of the learning process, using lecturing and memorization. Teachers drew a connection between their schools' limited financial capabilities and their limited innovative practices to support teaching and learning approaches. Teachers mentioned different challenges they face, such as time constraints to finish the difficult and fragmented syllabi and students' problematic behavior; however, they rarely referred to the lack of support or even resistance from school management. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs rated significantly low. Students' needs are accommodated through the shadow system of the private lessons in Egypt (Hargreaves, 1997; Hargreaves, 2001; OECD, 2015; Sobhy, 2012). Teachers fail to support academic diversity in classrooms, while parents pay high fees for private lessons in different subjects, to ensure better results on the student's report cards (Sobhy, 2012). In sum, despite the multiple educational reform strategies, the outcomes are modest indicating the still-existing predominance of quantity over quality and the schools' inability to meet needs of knowledge era (Zaki Ewiss, Abdelgawad, & Elgendy, 2019).

Summary

Many underlying factors impact the achievement of students with diverse learning needs in Egypt. The barriers to achievement can be organized into three areas: a) the absence of a national policy implementation plan to support academic diversity; b) the absence of leadership

capacity building and on-the-job training programs to support academic diversity; and c) the absence of differentiated instruction practices to support academic diversity.

The pre-university national strategic policies require implementation plans to help school leaders translate the national vision into school practices. A set of school-level policies and procedures must be in place to regulate support tailored to enhance all students' achievement in international schools in Egypt. Educational standards and policies and procedures must be translated into the school system and staff development. Trust and cultural barriers are areas for development, to support reform.

Several barriers impede teachers from supporting students with diverse needs in Egypt. The managerial duties of the school principals overshadow their responsibilities as instructional transformational leaders of change. Also, the capacity-building programs for inclusive leadership are absent. The centralization of education in the MOE and lack of awareness of the importance of public participation also impede leaders from having an active role as decision-makers in educational reform. The decentralization of the educational system is still under development in Egypt. The collectivistic culture weakens shared leadership practices. Egyptian teachers and leaders accept the unbalanced distribution of power within educational organizations.

The lack of qualifications and training in addition to the specific cognitive profile of teachers impede their development to support evidence-based teaching and learning practices. The limited opportunities for teaching and learning in Egyptian classrooms that support students with diverse learning needs impede educational reform. Teachers need school principals who can transform the learning environment and build the school's capacity to enhance education for all students. The next chapter describes the methodology, outcomes, and recommendations of a needs assessment study which investigated several of these barriers in depth.

Chapter Two

Assessing the Needs of Egyptian Schools Working with Academically Diverse Learners

Chapter One discussed the underlying causes of barriers to the services by Egyptian international schools to offer high-quality education for students with diverse learning needs. The current chapter presents an investigation into the three concentric ecological environments (i.e., national policies, school leadership, and teachers' pedagogical practices) and their networked interactions, which could promote inclusive education for students with diverse learning needs. In this chapter, the study is narrowed down to the scrutiny of the complex settings of two mainstreamed regular international schools in Egypt, using three different ecological school systems for data collection: policy advisers, school owners and leaders, and teachers' pedagogical practices.

The needs assessment study examined the school system's support for academic diversity in two different schools in Greater Cairo governorates (Cairo, Giza, and Qalubia). As there are many factors related to the lack of support to enhance the learning process of students with diverse learning needs, this needs assessment study was focused on the three previously mentioned variables. The study began by exploring teachers' dispositions toward academic diversity and their differentiated instructional practices. Moving from the microsystem to the mesosystem, school leadership duties and practices were examined. Finally, policy advisers were interviewed to depict how the current macrosystem deals with academic diversity in Egyptian schools and to explore their contribution toward national classroom-based policies.

These areas of focus were chosen due to the literature review's findings related to new educational laws, not only to accommodate students with academic diversity in regular education settings, but also to direct adequate attention to the need to enhance the professional development of educators and leaders, so they may meet the challenging demands of the on-

going educational reform (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2014; MOE, 2014; OECD, 2015; UNICEF, 2020). Furthermore, these foci were led by the paucity of current research exploring the education and learning conditions of students with a variety of academic needs in Egypt (Crabtree & Williams, 2013; Gaad, 2011). For these reasons, the needs assessment study examined the following multiple concentric systems: teachers' pedagogical methods, leadership functions, and responsibilities, and national policies and procedures to support academic diversity in international schools in Egypt.

Context of the Study

The two schools that participated in this study, School A and School B, serve kindergarten through grade 12 and kindergarten through grade eight students, respectively. The two private international co-ed schools, which are for-profit, are in two Greater Cairo Governorates (i.e., New Cairo and Giza). School A and School B have similar demographic characteristics, in that both schools target parents and students of middle-high socioeconomic status, as indicated by the schools' tuition and locations. Furthermore, the student body and most of the teachers in both schools are Egyptian, with most teachers having previous teaching experience in international schools in Egypt. Additionally, the researcher found commonalities in the structure and governance systems of the schools, based on their school organizational chart (see Appendix A).

Both schools have the same hierarchical structure and organization. The school owner and Board of Directors are responsible for generating the school's vision and mission and hiring the school leaders and senior managerial staff. Then, the second actor of power is the school principal who is the implementer of the owner's vision and the MOE regulations (MOE, 2007).

The school principal is responsible for the operational, organizational, and instructional processes at the school (OECD, 2015).

Opened in 2008, School A works at full capacity, serving more than 1400 students from kindergarten to high school. It is licensed by the MOE. Additionally, School A has received accreditation from US-based Cognia (previously known as AdvancED), Cambridge International Education in the United Kingdom, and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) in Switzerland. The day schedule operates from 7:45 AM until 3:00 PM, with eight teaching periods. The school strives for a strong academic standard. For example, the school is identified as a result-oriented school for high achievers and well-disciplined students, as reported by parents and teachers on social media and parent support groups. According to the school record and website, all grade 10 students are designated "on track" for college readiness according to the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing PSAT10 score. Furthermore, 85% of grade 10 students scored higher than average, on the PSAT10, as compared to other students worldwide. The school curriculum includes the American Curriculum Common Core, the International Cambridge British Curriculum designed for international schools, and the Egyptian Curriculum taught in Arabic. During admission, parents have the choice to enroll their children in American or British schools. In addition to one of these curricula, all Arab and Egyptian students must take three national subjects taught in Arabic: social studies in Arabic, Arabic language, and religion (i.e., Christianity or Islam).

School A has neither an internal policy for academic diversity nor a support unit. Instead, School A teachers report that the school has a school counselor who supports students' emotional and behavioral challenges, in addition to one support teacher who is responsible for helping some students with their curriculum requirements and the fundamental knowledge of literacy and

numeracy in English before graduating from the elementary level. School A teachers confirmed that school support is fragmented and strictly focused on elementary grades. Sometimes, middle and high school students who failed their courses are asked to leave the school at the end of the school year, as the school must maintain a high level of success rate for marketing purposes. Despite being an IB school—in the Diploma Program only—the policy needed to support academic diversity was not posted on the school website.

School B, which serves 520 Egyptian students from kindergarten through grade eight, has the same multiple accrediting bodies mentioned above. It operates for fewer hours than School A. Classes start at 8:15 AM and finish at 2:30 PM. It is an IB school where the curriculum framework is based on inquiry-based learning and Cambridge International objectives. School B teaches the three national subjects in Arabic as well. Based on published school policies and the accrediting body's feedback, School B has a relatively strong differentiated system to support students' different needs. First, School B has a policy by which teachers differentiate instruction for students with diverse learning needs to reach their potential in mixed-ability classrooms. This policy is a requirement from the accrediting body (IB). This policy is shared with School B teachers and posted on the school website. Second, School B has a support unit that serves students with diverse learning needs.

School B support unit aims to enhance student's language, learning, and behavioral development; students with diverse learning needs receive individualized services in reading, writing, and mathematics in English, according to their educational needs (see the School Inclusive Policy in Appendix B). The number of students enrolled in this unit does not exceed 10% of the total population, per Ministerial Decree No. 42 of 2015 (The Egyptian Chronicle, 2015). The support unit staff includes the unit coordinator, three support teachers, and a

psychologist. The support teachers have a background in special education. The school's general education teachers are given one training session about differentiation and academic diversity during an annual two-week training period in August, conducted by the support unit coordinator and support teachers. The August in-service training also provides an opportunity to quickly review the referral process and procedures; additionally, a follow-up session takes place in December to address the learning difficulties and differentiation. School B teachers expressed their concerns that they need more sessions throughout the school year.

At school A, the referral process goes through multiple steps and procedures (see Appendix C). First, school counselors distribute the referral forms to all teachers during the August in-service training. The referral form starts with the reason for referral, whether academic or behavioral, or both. Then, teachers are required to describe symptoms that they observe in their setting and strategies they use to support the student's need. Second, counselors and teachers start student observations during September. In October, the school principal, the school counselor, and the teachers meet to discuss the referred students' challenges and level of performance, to decide on further intervention.

The school administration meets with the referred students' parents to request a full psychological and cognitive evaluation. Parents take their referred children to a psychology clinic outside the school where he or she is tested to identify cognitive and sensory weaknesses and strengths that require a set of accommodations at the school. The psycho-educational assessment is a detailed evaluation of the child's cognitive and academic abilities, which includes an analysis of the underlying causes of the student's level of achievement. Furthermore, it analyses the mental processes underlying the child's educational performance.

Students are admitted to the support unit in November after submitting their psycho-educational report to identify their needs. In research, the interdisciplinary team collaborates to create the student's individual educational plan (IEP), which includes a set of accommodations and modifications to access curricula and/or learning environment (Crowne, 2008; Marston, Muyskens & Canter, 2004). Students with diverse learning needs are provided with special, tailored services and programs based on their IEP or Gifted Plans to reach their potential.

School B faces organizational challenges that hinder the achievement of students with diverse learning needs. Some students are enrolled in the support unit without any documentation and standardized evaluation, as parents ignore the administration's request for external psycho-educational evaluation. Due to the low performance of students, an administrative decision is usually made to provide the special services until parents submit the report. As a result, some students are enrolled in the program with no psycho-educational reports that are necessary to make informed decisions and to finalize the documentation needed to issue an IEP. It is challenging for teachers and support teachers to work with students without an IEP.

Out of a total school enrollment of 520 students in School B, 65 students (12.5%) were identified and diagnosed with significant academic and /or learning difficulties, in addition to students with English as a second language needs (see Table 2.1).

Table 2. 1

School B Academic Diversity Demographics for the 2016-2017 School Year (N = 520)

Reporting Category	Number	Percent
Students with identified specific learning difficulties	20	3.8
Students with identified behavioral difficulties	33	6.7
Gifted students	10	1.9
Total	65	12.5

Note. n = 65.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the needs assessment study was to understand how the underlying factors that contribute to the problem of practice are functioning in two international schools in Egypt. The focus of this needs assessment study was to determine the service model (i.e., pedagogical practices, leadership practice, and school policies and procedures aligned with national policies) which supports academic diversity. The findings from this needs assessment study were used to conduct additional research to develop a targeted intervention designed to improve systemic support for academic diversity in the international schools in Egypt.

This needs assessment study attempted to answer the following research questions.

Research Questions

RQ.1 What are teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward differentiated instruction to support students with diverse learning needs in international schools in Egypt?

RQ.2 What are the school leaders' knowledge and skills to support teachers differentiated instructional practices in their classes, to meet the needs of academically diverse learners in international schools in Egypt?

RQ.3 How are the national classroom-based policies implemented to support students with diverse learning needs in international schools in Egypt?

Methods

This section includes the sample, variables, measures, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The needs assessment study was conducted using exploratory mixed-method research as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Creswell (2014). This mixed-method research paradigm narrows the gap between two polarized research methods: qualitative and quantitative research methods. Mixed method research lies on the continuum between qualitative and quantitative research. As such, it may include both open- and closed-ended questions and uses persuasive and rigorous procedures connecting and embedding data for a comprehensive approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Three different methods of data collection were used to conduct the needs assessment study: surveys, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group. First, the Teachers' Survey of Practices with Students of Varying Needs (SOP) (Tomlinson et al., 1995) was carried out with teachers, followed by a teacher focus group. Second, the researcher explored the school owner and principals' insights about leadership roles and responsibilities using an in-person survey. Finally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with policy advisers to explore the nature of support for academic diversity mentioned in the national policy.

Participants

The study participants included 200 teachers, two principals, and three policy advisers. These key informants were chosen because they are assumed to be aware of the issues and challenges concerning teaching and learning in Egyptian schools. Further, the policy advisers were chosen because of their awareness of the on-going national educational reform.

Teachers. One hundred and one teachers participated in the study; 36 of these completed the initial English language electronic survey, and 65 completed a hardcopy version in Arabic. Offering the Arabic language hardcopy version increased the response rate from 19% to 50%. Of the 101 teachers who participated, ninety-five percent of the teachers were Egyptian (n = 95), while five percent represented international teachers, including 1 teacher each from the United States of America, South Africa, United Kingdom, Jordan, and France. Also, 91 were female teachers and 10 were male teachers. Their years of teaching ranged from one to 20 years of experience (see Table 2.2).

Table 2. 2

Teacher Sample: Role at School (N = 200)

Role at School	Percentage
Elementary classroom teacher	38
English-speaking middle and high school subject teacher	32
Arabic-speaking elementary and middle school subject teacher	27
Support teacher	4

Note. n = 101.

Six teachers from School B who completed the SOP were selected, due to their position and their area of teaching, to explore their responses on the SOP using a focus group interview. The focus group included two homeroom teachers from kindergarten and grade two and their co-teachers, and two subject teachers (i.e., Arabic and support). Their years of experience ranged between three to seven years, and their ages ranged from 25 to 35.

School owners and principals. The school owners in both schools are businessmen coming from a real estate and construction background. The school owners invested their money in establishing international schools, which is considered a profitable investment in Egypt. They aimed to recruit school principals with a strong educational background to lead the school. The owners recruited the principal from international job fairs or local hiring agencies. According to

OECD (2015), criteria for principals' recruitment, standards, and preparation programs are unavailable in Egypt.

The principal of School A has a master's degree in business with no experience in inclusive education. The principal of School B earned a master's degree in special education from the United Kingdom and is currently working on her doctoral studies in educational leadership. She has a strong background in special education, gifted education, and inclusion.

Policy advisers. Three university professors who have served as policy advisers to the MOE were recruited for the study. The male policy adviser has a doctoral degree in public policy and works at a public university in Egypt. Both female policy advisers have a background in the field of education and cognitive psychology. Both work at the American University in Cairo. One of the female interviewees is an American woman who is married to an Egyptian professor of psychology. The three faculty members were chosen because they were part of the working team in the National Strategic Plan of Pre-University Education (2007-2012), while one was also involved in the updated National Strategic Plan of Pre-university Education (2014-2030).

Measures and Instrumentation

Based on the review of the literature, variables were identified, and multiple tools were adapted or designed to answer the research questions (see Table 2.3). The needs assessment study captured the key informants' insights into and understanding of the current situation of academic diversity at international schools in Egypt, including (a) teachers' practices and attitudes toward differentiation; (b) principals' roles and leadership styles; and (c) national policies for academic diversity.

Table 2. 3

Needs Assessment Instruments Used with Teachers, Owners/Principals, & Policy Advisers

Construct	Measures / Instrument
Teacher's pedagogical practices	Survey of Practices with Students of Varying Needs (SOP) Focus Group Interview
Owner and principal practices	School Owners and Principal In-Person Survey
National educational policies & practices	Semi-structured interview

The SOP evaluated teachers' practices and attitudes toward academic diversity (Tomlinson et al., 1995). A focus group of six teachers selected from those who completed the SOP was then carried out to triangulate the data and to broaden the understanding of the teachers' practices in the professional context using quantitative and qualitative data formats sequentially (Creswell, 2014). Each of the school owners and principals was surveyed individually in a face-to-face meeting with the researcher, to explore the criteria for recruitment and responsibilities of the school principal. Finally, three policy advisers were interviewed separately to provide their insights into the national educational strategic policy.

Survey of practices with students of varying needs (SOP). The SOP (see Appendix D) was developed by the National Research Center on Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) at the University of Virginia (Tomlinson et al., 1995) to assess attitudes and beliefs about academically diverse learners and differentiated instruction appropriate for meeting their needs. This instrument is appropriate to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of preservice as well as in-service teachers (Moon, Callahan, & Tomlinson, 1999).

Part I of the SOP has 36 statements to address teachers' attitudes toward differentiation and students with diverse learning needs in their classrooms. The survey uses the term remedial

student and students with a learning disability interchangeably throughout the eight questions concerning special education. The rest of Part I statements focus on gifted and regular education students. The participants responded to each question using a 5-item Likert-type scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Part II of the SOP focuses on the time allocation and attention given to remedial students, average students, and gifted students by asking teachers to rank each group accordingly. In Part III, respondents are asked to rate their confidence about the identification process and differentiated instruction on a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from *not confident* to *very confident*, regarding their ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs of academically diverse learners. In Part IV, teachers are asked to indicate if they would use instructional strategies with gifted students, average students, or remedial students.

The researcher piloted the SOP with two teachers before sending a link to all participants. The two teachers were able to give feedback on the wording of items and clarity of concepts, which is a process that O' Leary (2014) suggests being carried out before conducting a survey. No changes were made to the survey, except in the demographic section, which requested information on teachers' nationality, years of experience, teaching area, grade level, and gender. For this needs assessment study, the SOP was translated into Arabic. To help ensure a high-quality double translation process, two steps were followed (Brislin, 1980). First, the SOP was translated from English into Arabic by a native speaker of Arabic who is fluent in English and is a professional translator. The validity of the Arabic translation was then evaluated by having another professional translator translate the Arabic version back into English. The quality and accuracy of all translations into the original language were verified with the help of a native Arabic speaker who specializes in English at a university, and a native English speaker.

Teachers focus group interview protocol. The teacher focus group interview questions were based on the SOP survey results and the review of the literature. Teachers were asked about differentiated instructional practices and the school's role in facilitating these approaches (see Appendix E). The researcher used open-ended questions to generate responses. The purpose of the heterogeneous focus group was to explore the teachers' understanding and their deep insights regarding their practices to accommodate students with diverse learning needs in their classrooms.

The focus group questions stressed three themes that emerged from an analysis of the SOP results: 1) the identification process, 2) the type of support and accommodations received by students with diverse learning needs receive in the regular class, and 3) the school system's way of addressing academic differences, especially for gifted and underachieving learners. Some examples of the focus group's questions were, "how do you identify weak/ gifted students in your classroom?", "what are the types of accommodations you used that support their learning in the classroom?", "what are the tools you used to identify the gifted underachievers?", and "how do you support gifted students' weaknesses in your classroom?".

School owners and principals in-person survey. Exploring the mesosystem at the school, the school owners and principals' survey helped the researcher elicit more information from the respondents about the principals' selection and hiring criteria concerning students with diverse learning needs, backgrounds, responsibilities, practices, and behavior (see Appendix F). The survey included seven open-ended questions about the organizational chart, recruitment criteria, and principal's responsibilities, accountability, curriculum design, data-driven decision making, and professional development. An example of the questions found in the survey is *"*who is responsible for designing the job description for the school principal?". The survey also

included six statements where the principal rated their performance concerning evaluating classroom instruction, using evidence of classroom instruction to guide teacher development, strategically utilizing resources, creating a reflective and collaborative environment, and guiding and leading data-based decision making. The school owners and principals responded to each statement using a 4-item Likert-type scale (*always*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *never*).

Policy adviser interview protocol. The purpose of the interview was to depict the current situation of academic diversity in pre-university institutions in Egypt. The semi-structured interview had three different categories of questions. The policy advisers were asked different questions regarding their positions in the Ministry of Education/National Council for Disability and their roles in the National Strategic Pre-university Plans for education. Also, they were asked about the future steps and recommendations supporting academic diversity in Egypt (see Appendix G). The open-ended questions attempted to explore their views of the MOE strategic plan and the Constitution of the Arab Republic in Egypt (2014), which support the education of students with diverse learning needs in regular schools. Then, they discussed the future steps needed to improve the provision of educational services for academically diverse students in Egypt. Some questions of the policy advisors' semi-structured interview were: "could you brief us on the history of policies and ministerial decisions drafted to cater to the students with diverse learning needs in the Egyptian regular schools? " and "what are the different approaches necessary to support students with diverse learning needs in the classroom? Prompted: in terms of teachers, principals, and laws?.*"*

Procedures

This section describes the data collection and data analysis processes used in this needs assessment study to address the research questions.

Data Collection

The data were collected over eight weeks in the academic year 2016-2017. The researcher collected the SOP from the two schools. The data from the survey helped inform the questions asked in the focus group interview. Also, principals and owners were surveyed, and finally the researcher interviewed the policy adviser.

Survey of practices with students of varying needs (SOP). The researcher initially sent the survey via Survey Monkey, an online survey software used to create polls and survey questionnaires for research and professional purposes. The school offices sent out the survey link by email to all teachers; however, the researcher received only 36 responses from two hundred teachers. The two schools' leaders reported that the poor response was because the survey was shared with the teachers electronically and it was in English.

Due to the teachers' lack of accessibility to the online survey, the two schools requested a pen and paper survey, in Arabic. At both schools, the teachers were gathered in the multipurpose room during break time to fill in the survey, in the presence of the researcher. The researcher introduced the purpose of the survey, answered all their questions, made sure that no questions were skipped, and collected the completed surveys. Teachers took one hour to fill in the survey.

Teachers focus group interview. Teachers participating in the focus group were informed by the researcher of the procedures of the interview, which lasted for 40 minutes. The researcher audio recorded the interview after obtaining the teachers' written consent. All teachers were eager to answer the questions by taking turns to converse with the researcher. They were all motivated to share their experiences and concerns. The transcription was later sent to all six teachers by email for member checking.

The owners and principals in-person survey. The researcher sent a survey link to the participants; then she scheduled individual meetings with the four participants. The in-person survey was scheduled away from their school offices to avoid any interruptions. The school owners and principals filled in the survey while being interviewed in-person by the researcher. All individual interviews were audio recorded. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions were member-checked for accuracy. The respondents received a copy of the transcriptions to ensure transparency and accuracy, as they could correct the transcript. The participants took 75 minutes to fill in the survey while discussing the questions and their responses with the researcher.

Policy advisers' interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with the policy advisors. Two meetings were in person and one policy adviser was interviewed through a phone call. All meetings were audio-recorded and transcribed. Each of the policy advisers described their positions and their capacity to inform policies, and they discussed their recommendations to improve the current situation for academic diversity. The policy advisers received a copy of the transcriptions; they confirmed the accuracy of the data.

Data Analysis

Different qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze data collected from various stakeholders. The following section examines data analysis for the data collected by each measure or instrument. All data were analyzed by the researcher and her advisor.

Quantitative data. The SOP's raw data were first entered into an excel spreadsheet to be checked for accuracy of entry by the researcher and then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The frequencies of the teachers' responses were tabulated (see Appendix D). The researcher and the adviser reviewed the frequency tables of the SPSS output,

as these reflected the teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward differentiation for students with diverse learning. Furthermore, the in-person survey of the owner and principal's responses were entered on an excel sheet, which the researcher revised to identify patterns of responses and information about the principals' recruitment procedures, qualifications, and responsibilities in the school. The in-person survey quantitive data were imported into SPSS for descriptive analysis. The quantitive data were imported to SPSS to indicate the frequency of agreement and disagreement among educators.

Qualitative data. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data from the teachers' focus group, owner and principal's survey, and the policy advisers' semi-structured interview using an inductive or grounded theory approach. All transcripts were read and revised by the researcher and advisor. First, using inductive emerging coding, the researcher organized and classified answers into categories and labeled each group of responses to answer the research question. Second, identifying major themes required that the researcher and advisor read and reread the transcripts several times to confirm and highlight the major themes that emerged from the data analysis. The researcher generated the initial codes and sorted them into broader themes that were connected to the research questions. Codes were compared to create or combine new categories. Finally, category definition and exact quotes and excerpts were used to report the findings. This thematic analysis gives flexibility to the interpretation of the data collected during the interview; it also allows the researcher to approach large chunks of data by sorting them into broad categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Validity and reliability. Collecting triangulated data from different sources contributed to securing internal validity and reliability. The researcher used multiple lines of evidence, theories, and instruments to explore the underlying factors of the problem of practice (Schutt,

2015). Despite having a strong content validity measuring teachers' attitudes and practices of teachers towards differentiation, the SOP Part I of the survey had low reliability according to the original study. The original researchers reduced the number of items as part of the piloting process and it still had low reliability and limited internal consistency (Ferra, 2006; Tomlinson et, al., 1995). Also, the original study administrated classroom observations to validate teachers' responses (Tomlinson et, al., 1995), this step did not occur in the current study. Instead, the researcher conducted a focus group interview with six teachers to triangulate the data collected from the survey.

As for the principals, The Owner and Principal Survey's questions were well-designed around the research's constructs. In-person surveys are considered the best way to collect data (Schutt, 2015). In the study, subject's errors and bias were taken into consideration. For example, the in-person surveys were scheduled away from the school offices to avoid any interruptions and to limit biases. The principals were individually interviewed without the presence of the school owner. The respondents may answer in a certain way to please the researcher or the school owner (Schutt, 2015). Also, to ensure an adequate level of reliability, the researcher used the in-person survey to avoid guessing by respondents, skipping questions, and misinterpreting instruction. To overcome these factors, data were triangulated using different methods and the researcher used peer debriefing method.

Trustworthiness. Several techniques were used in the needs assessment study to ensure trustworthiness. As required in qualitative studies, the researcher kept field notes to document informal observations, contacts, conversations, and impressions throughout the study (Schutt, 2015). Also, the researcher attempted to avoid biases by employing peer debriefing, that is, to engage a colleague in data interpretation (Schutt, 2015).

Furthermore, the researcher has worked in the field of special/gifted education for more than twelve years. This extensive experience helped to ensure that the researcher has a profound and accurate understanding of the target phenomenon under examination (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Also, the researcher used member checking and peer debriefing enhanced research validity: a group of teachers and school principals checked the transcripts of the interview and survey, respectively. The researcher and the adviser were checking procedures and were engaged in the data analysis and interpretation of the responses to the questionnaire, focus group, and semi-structured interviews (Nastasi, & Schensul, 2005).

Findings and Discussion

The quantitative and qualitative data collected provided important information about the needs within the Egyptian educational landscape. Assessing academic diversity in two international schools in Egypt allowed the researcher to identify the areas where gaps exist in the development of school support systems for Egyptian students with diverse learning needs. Overall, the school-based differentiated instruction system to support students with academically diverse needs is underdeveloped in School B and absent in School A; the same general finding applied to the role of principals as instructional transformational leaders. While national policy efforts are well established, gaps were identified in relation to strategic planning, alignment, and translation of theoretical reforms into practice.

The SOP Results

The SOP survey aimed to answer the research question investigating teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward differentiated instruction (see Table 2.4). Analysis of the results from Part I of the survey suggests that teachers strongly disagreed on some misconceptions concerning gifted education such as elitism and overachievement of gifted

students. For example, 84% of surveyed teachers disagreed that allowing gifted students to work on assignments that are different from the rest of the students is playing favorites and fostering elitism. Examples of these questions include, “having gifted students work on individual projects or assignments isolates them from the rest of the class” and “allowing gifted students to work on assignments that are different from the rest of the students is playing favorites and fostering elitism”. Additionally, the need to accommodate gifted students in the regular classroom was confirmed by 95% of respondents who agreed on the importance of pre-assessments of prior knowledge before instruction; moreover, 81% of the surveyed teachers thought that students’ grades are not the only indicator of high potential. Furthermore, teachers agreed that upon mastering some of the materials, students should be given alternative tasks to accommodate their level of ability (83%), and gifted students should direct their own learning (80%). As for students with learning difficulties, teachers agreed that students with special educational needs should work under the direction of their teachers (89%) and struggling students must be granted extended time to finish their assignments (92%). Additionally, lessons must be tailored to students’ interests and abilities (93%).

Table 2.4

Teachers’ Perception and Practices toward Differentiated Instruction (n=101)

Subconstruct / Items	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Low Achievement		
1- A student who is learning disabled will usually be a low achiever in most subjects.	32	63
14- Students who are learning disabled are usually poor readers.	37	51
19- Remedial students do not do well in most subjects.	30	62
4- Remedial students find it difficult to work on their own without teacher direction.	89	8

Accommodations		
9-Remedial students may need additional time to practice mastering basic skills.	92	2
27- Students who differ markedly in ability level from the average learner should be taught in special classes to fully meet their needs.	38	52
30- Remedial students have difficulty grasping concepts and need a more fact-based curriculum.	59	33
Twice Exceptional		
20- Learning disabled students who are gifted will need to concentrate their study to remediate their weaknesses so they can go on to use their areas of strength.	76	6

Note. n = 101

The findings are in line with previous international studies that used the SOP to identify teachers' perceptions of academic diversity. Teachers were aware of students' differences and expressed positive attitudes toward differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, et, al. 1995). However, teachers' responses showed less confidence when they were asked about their practices such as planning and accommodating for students with learning difficulties as well as gifted students in their classes.

In Part II, teachers' responses indicated that they allocate more time and attention to remedial students (88%); teachers reported that gifted students received the least time and attention in class (85%). Part III showed that teachers feel most confident when identifying students with learning difficulties (38%) as well as gifted students (42%), as they understand their characteristics. However, examining teachers' responses concerning planning and adapting lesson plans to accommodate different learning needs, teachers' responses indicated a significant drop. Few teachers reported a positive confidence level creating and adapting lessons plans to meet either the needs of gifted students (14%) or those of students with learning difficulties

(8%). Furthermore, in rating their confidence in their ability to individualize instruction, their responses varied between (17%) teaching gifted students and (14%) teaching remedial students.

Part IV was handled differently because this section had two different modes of responses in the electronic version and pen and paper survey. The electronic version allowed only one answer, while teachers who answered via pen and paper were able to tick more than one answer. Thus, the pen and paper responses were excluded from this analysis. The electronic responses revealed that the techniques and strategies most often used with gifted students by these teachers are higher-level thinking activities 85% (n = 33) and independent study 64% (n = 23); while individualized instruction 80% (n = 28) and drill and practice 61% (n = 21) are commonly used for students with learning difficulties. Teachers responded that strategies used with average students are ability grouping 53% (n = 18), cooperative activities 65% (n = 25), projects 57% (n = 21), value training 45% (13), and workbook exercises 65% (n = 24).

Teachers focus group. Six teachers in School B revealed their thoughts about the level of support their academically diverse students receive in the classroom. Teachers identified their classroom practices as student-centered and inquiry-based when they differentiate instruction according to students' abilities. Different strategies were identified, such as building the lesson based on students' interests, using heterogeneous groups, using a multi-sensory approach to give explicit instruction, and collaborating with parents. Then, teachers were prompted to describe their feelings toward the process of differentiation. Five out of six teachers used the word "frustrated" to describe their feelings. Examples of their discussions included: "We feel overwhelmed and frustrated working with so many different abilities in one class as we lack administration support"; and "it is so frustrating. Sometimes, we do not know what to do." They related their negative feelings toward a lack of administrative support while carrying what they

perceived to be an excessive teaching workload (i.e., collaborative meetings, planning, duties, and substitution).

In the focus group interview, teachers' responses showed gaps in knowledge regarding differentiated tools used (e.g., conceptual understanding, curriculum compacting, tiered lessons, learning stations, orbits, literature circles, etc.). Also, their responses in Part IV indicated limited knowledge about the teaching strategies used in a mixed abilities classroom. Teachers' responses to teaching strategies questions are similar enough to ascertain a consistent pattern of responses in both forms of data collection. Furthermore, only one teacher confirmed designing her lessons using diagnostic tests and pre-assessments. This finding contradicts teachers' responses on Part I of the SOP, as teachers (n = 95, 95%) agreed on the importance of using pre-assessment and students' prior knowledge to differentiate instruction. This finding is aligned with the original study: teachers have a positive attitude towards differentiation; however, they lack the knowledge and competencies to differentiate in their classroom (Tomlinson, et, al. 1995).

The final question of the focus group interview focused on gifted underachieving. The teachers' understanding of instruction of gifted students was significantly limited, and they expressed their interest in developing their pedagogical skills in this area. Also, in SOP Part I, some teachers responded by selecting "Do not Know" regarding accommodating gifted underachievers in their classes. Examples of these questions include, "working too hard in school leads to burn-out in gifted students" (19 responses) and "learning disabled learners who are gifted will need to concentrate their study to remediate their weaknesses so they can go on to use their areas of strengths" (17 responses). However, most teachers responded that some underachievers are gifted students (77 responses).

Survey of School owners and Principals

The survey examined the school owners' and principals' knowledge and skills to support differentiated instruction. Two owners and two principals responded to the in-person survey. The school owner as the Chair of the Board of Directors is responsible for hiring the principal and designing a job description and the governance structure of the school. The principal's job description is mainly focused on establishing school vision, operation and organization, school culture, and instructional excellence, as reported by the principals.

Both schools strongly confirm the principal's accountability for all students learning; however, responses to several questions revealed some gaps in understanding and the imbalance between their operational and instructional roles. This point came in line with literature that reflected principals' challenges to manage an inclusive system in their schools and that they may abandon their duties to others (Davidson & Algozzine, 2002). For example, when the school owners and principals were asked about evaluating classroom instruction, their responses varied between *always* and *often*. One principal reported that after a class observation the principal usually meets with the supervisors and teachers to discuss development. School B principal explained that,

> The constructive feedback and meeting with the pedagogical leadership team and teachers. The principal class visits are not for feedback and development. This is the job of the academic coordinator. The principal's class visits are for general maintenance of the learning process to inform decision making. The information the principal collects from class visits is used in 1) discussing the situation with the coordinator based on authentic observation; 2) guiding or redirecting anything that does not fall in place with the school vision, educational excellence, positive school culture, etc.

A point of difference was found between the two school principals in relation to their view of data-driven decision-making. The principals' responses varied between an entirely and a partially data-driven decision, which may indicate that the concept of shared instructional

leadership needs more investigation, as the data-driven practice is intrinsically essential to the instructional leadership role. Shared instructional leadership is a type of leadership practice to govern institutions by expanding the number of staff involved in making decisions related to organization, operation, and academics (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

To answer the research question, the hiring process did not emphasize teaching and learning for academic diversity. Hiring a school principal with qualifications to lead teachers' differentiated practices and enhance all students' achievement in regular school is necessary yet overlooked. The role of instructional transformational leader for academic diversity is underdeveloped in the two schools.

Policy advisers' Impact on Policy

The main goal of the semi-structured interviews with policy advisers was to examine the impact they have on the national policy for academic diversity and how national policies were translated into a school classroom policy and procedures to support academic diversity. The results of the individual interviews of key informants were closely aligned with the current situation of education reform and academic diversity efforts; additionally, themes of macro-level competence and attitude emerged from their responses. All interviewees worked as advisers at the Policy and Strategic Planning Unit of the MOE, which was established in 2006 by Ministerial Decree No. 97 of 23 March 2006 (MOE, 2007) to provide research and documentation to support the strategic planning process in education. The role of this unit was to construct a plan, following the issuance of "the National Framework for Education Policies in Egypt" in March 2006. The plan was to develop an entity to evaluate educational challenges and to offer educational reform top-down and bottom-up solutions. Multiple national and international experts were involved (i.e., governmental officials, faculty professors, civil society, donors,

international experts). The three policy advisers agreed that the two *National Strategic Plans for Pre-University Education* (2007, 2014) were well written and well researched to support the MOE's vision of education reform. National policies support academic diversity and call for educational reform that includes all students in regular schools, whether public or private.

On the other hand, their concerns shed a different light on the policies' limitations. First, the objectives of the *National Strategic Plans for Pre-University Education* (2007) were too optimistic to achieve (OECD, 2015). One policy adviser confirmed her efforts in drafting the background chapter, however, she said: "the policy followed all technically-appropriate international steps. The problem was that we over-planned the policy and its objectives. We put five-year targets that can be accomplished in 20 years, with no financial plan".

Another problem is the disconnection between the planning and implementation teams. Despite the sincere efforts of hardworking teams, the outcome of the policy indicated that the implementation process has been problematic for several reasons (OECD, 2015). The policy was written in English by the national strategic planning team and the international team of the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP). Then, it was translated by educational advisers paid by USAID.

> IIEP played other roles, but, since they are based in Paris, while USAID is in Maadi [in Cairo], the latter group had a more in-depth and widespread influence on the policy details. However, the chain of implementation was not clear; it is like the telephone game where messages are usually distorted. The officials lack effective ways of communication and the essential skills for teamwork. The leadership needs to be aware of the followers and trust them. This point is a significant problem.

The inaccessibility of data and the lack of cooperation and detachments among officials, leaders, and followers created an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust, which has led to a delay in achieving the desired results. More contemporary educational reform attempts were not transformative because these were perceived to be top-down reforms that were driven by

foreign-aid agencies, and had no support from stakeholders (Barakat, 2019). Ibrahim and Hozayin (2006) referred to the absence of a clear reform-making cycle, which seldom includes "clear statements of policy, followed by tidy implementation, ending in evaluation and planning for the next cycle" (p. 4). There is an absence of "an institutionalized integrated system based on results for following-up and evaluation" (MOE, 2014, p. 44). Improvement plans with identical objectives, with changed phrasings, are repeatedly adopted without adequate evaluations of their actual impact, and accordingly, a gap continues to persist between policies, practices, and outcomes (Ammar, 2005).

Shifting the focus from evaluating the education policy to understanding academic diversity, it was reported that the lack of awareness among the officials and society is evident. Another policy adviser confirmed:

> The most serious problem is societal awareness and their culture to accept the differences or the concept of inclusion. It has nothing to do with education. Even for the gifted students, educators and parents do not understand their needs. Some teachers believe it is better to leave them with their peers so they can help them.

In summary, the current situation indicates the gap between the policy and practices. The need to translate the policies into clear procedures and implementation plans and to raise the awareness to support academic diversity is evident.

Summary

The results of the needs assessment study revealed gaps in school leaders and teachers' inclusive knowledge and practices. Despite showing a positive attitude toward academic diversity, teachers reported their inadequate knowledge and teaching practices that hindered their support to accommodate students with diverse learning needs in their classes. Also, they emphasized the lack of administrative support.

On the for-profit school management level, certain areas are controlled by the school owners (i.e., finance, hiring), which could also be a source of great frustration for the principal, especially those that are trained educators. Furtherer, school principals sometimes are the decision-makers for instruction despite their inadequate level of knowledge and skills needed to support the proper provision of academic diversity services in their school.

Finally, national policies are well-developed to support academic diversity at Egyptian schools; however, inclusive education legal mandates lack alignment with school-level policies and procedures that could help translate theory into practice. First-order and second order level of change must exist in collaboration to achieve institutional reform. School leaders are the backbone for such a reform as they develop the environment and practices that enable this change to happen (Leithwood,1994).

Chapter Three

Preparing Inclusive Leaders to Support Academic Diversity in School Contexts

The various school support systems and inclusive models provided to students with disabilities (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Villa & Thousands, 2016) and gifted students (Van Tessel Beska, 2007) influence students' academic performance. The researcher conducted a needs assessment study at two international schools in Egypt, which included a survey, a focus group, an in-person survey, and a semi-structured interview. In the needs assessment study, the participants revealed their knowledge, practices, and dispositions toward their schools and national policies that govern inclusive education and differentiated instruction for academic diversity in Egypt.

Several key findings from the participant's responses shed light on important factors that informed the design of the intervention. First, schoolteachers reported their positive dispositions toward differentiated instruction for academic diversity; however, when asked about the implementation of differentiation practices, teachers' responses tended to be less consistent and confident. For example, teaching time allocation and planning differentiated instruction activities for gifted students were significantly limited. The teachers' focus group responses showed that their knowledge about differentiated instruction policies and procedures is limited as well. They reported the absence of instructional transformational leadership for academic diversity at their schools.

Moving to the mesosystem and exosystem, the data collection aimed to explore school leaders' qualifications, recruitment and selection criteria, and their knowledge, competencies, and dispositions toward the leadership for academic diversity in Egypt. School principals reported an imbalance between their managerial and instructional roles at school. This finding was in line with teachers' feedback about the absence of instructional leadership for academic

diversity at their schools. Furthermore, the needs assessments study revealed the principals' inadequate knowledge and skills to support differentiated instruction in their schools. The policy advisers indicated a gap between national policies and implementation procedures to ensure support for academic diversity.

The goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research related to interventions designed to develop an understanding that helps build evidence-based support systems for academic diversity and translates the national policy into practice in Egyptian schools. Based on the findings of the needs assessment study and a focus on the role of instructional leaders at the selected schools, this chapter further investigates school systems and leaders' traits and styles that promote inclusive leadership for academic diversity to inform the proposed leadership preparation program. Due to the lack of published academic research in the field of educational leadership and inclusive education in Egypt (Crabtree & Williams, 2013), the researcher uses western literature to support the study. An inclusive school system and inclusive leadership were chosen as a focus of the study, due to their reported positive impact on teachers' practices and students' achievement in western contexts (Lasky & Karge, 2006; McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, & Terry, 2010; Perez, Uline, Johnson, James-Ward, &. Basom, 2011; Villa & Thousands, 2015; Wallace, 2016). The coming paragraphs unpacked multiple theories and practices that develop the skills and dispositions needed for transformational inclusive leaders to build consensuses and school capacity for academic diversity. Figure 3.1 shows the relationships among authentic leadership, emotional intelligence, and social cognitive theory, as they contribute to the overarching transformational leadership theory. The proposed inclusive leadership intervention used the theoretical foundations shown in Figure 3.1 to design the training coursework and activities.

Figure 3. 1

Relationships Between Transformational Theory and Key Leadership Traits and Theories: Authentic Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, and Social Cognitive Theory.

Authentic Transformational Leaders

The transition from being a school manager to becoming a transformational leader is needed to balance competing demands and lead the change needed for academic diversity (Zapata, 2016). Control and command characterize traditional managers who act in their self-interest and are measured in terms of personal wealth or other forms of tangible compensation (Donaldson, 1990). Unlike traditional management, transformational leaders empower staff by having a shared vision and common goals; accordingly, they work with teams, building a

consensus and sharing their leadership responsibility with other teachers (Hallinger, 2010). Therefore, when providing leadership for inclusive change, school leaders use the transformational leadership model to share their leadership responsibilities with other teachers through delegating responsibilities and teacher teaming (Balfanz, 2012; Villa & Thousands, 2016). In creating inclusive classrooms, school transformational leaders influence teachers by providing individualized support and intellectual motivation using a bottom-up model as they support teachers' competencies and their professional growth. In this environment, collaboration, reflection, and critical thinking are encouraged, to promote student learning. At the same time, transformational leaders are responsive to their teachers' individual needs, instead of controlling them, to meet necessary outcomes (Hallinger, 2010). Transformational leaders need to use a set of skills and strategies to build the teachers' capacity. They build the team's competencies and inspire them without an over-emphasis on power tactics. They also model best practices; exercise important organizational values; lead teachers' training and development; encourage shared leadership for teachers; engage teachers in a data-driven, decision-making process; and build a positive collaborative reflective learning community at their school (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999).

Transformational leaders in inclusive settings orchestrate change and progress in education by attending to five factors (Villa & Thousands, 2016). First, visioning or building a shared vision of inclusive schooling within a community. One strategy used to embark on a common vision is to build consensus for inclusive education through using shared materials and readings, visiting other inclusive schools, and participating in a professional learning community. School leaders must prepare themselves for the resistance to the change that they are

envisioning. With passion, they can spark a culture change in their settings; however, culture changes can take years.

Second, school leaders are instructional mentors who empower teachers with competencies to create inclusive contexts and confidence using meaningful incentives to raise their morale and strengthen their motivation. Transformational leaders encourage the whole school as a community to be informed about inclusion from different perspectives—moral, legal, and practical—offering the Schoolhouse Model (Figure 4.1) as a framework to build the school's inclusive capacity (Villa & Thousands, 2016).

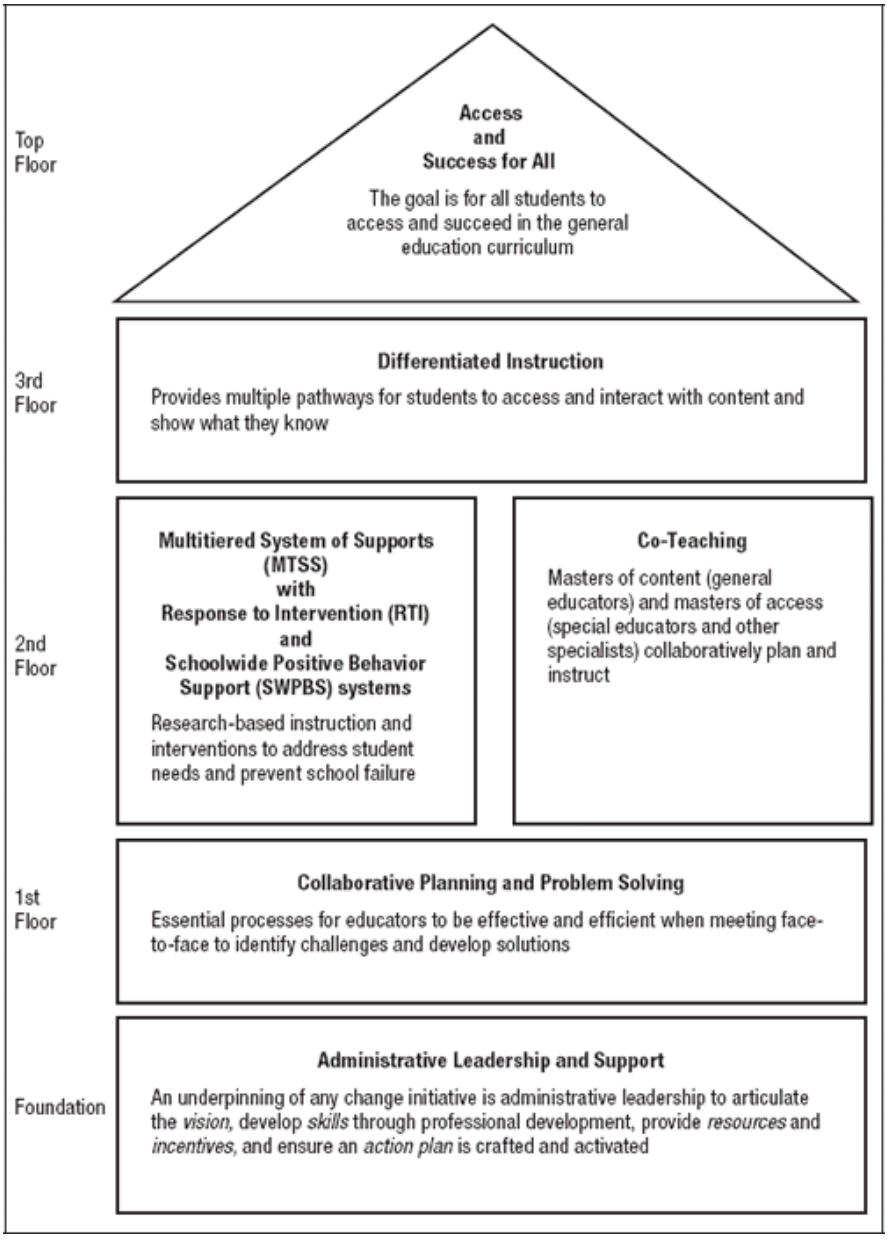
Third, to motivate staff, a transformational inclusive leader uses their deep knowledge about the staff to give meaningful praise on their inclusive efforts, such as helping one another, orienting a new staff member, or taking initiative in planning or preparing a forum or conference for inclusive schools. School staff needs to have a voice in professional development plans and mode of delivery (e.g., by blended workshops, coaching and mentoring opportunities, co-teaching, and study groups). Shared leadership fosters intrinsic motivation, which helps staff to fulfill their duties without an external driver or influencer (Villa & Thousands, 2016).

Fourth, sharing a common vision about inclusion coupled with knowledge and intrinsic motivation for change requires technical resources to put all these ends into action. Talent development is a central focus of school leaders, as it can lead to redefining staff roles according to the organizational needs and professional growth (Villa & Thousands, 2016). While the school administration manages the educational program for all students**,** a foundation of emotional support for teachers and staff, including critical thinking and problem-solving teamwork, helps to develop solutions to barriers to establishing successful inclusive settings for all students. Through a collaborative and co-teaching model, the role of general teachers and support staff is

redefined to maximize both the instructional ratio to student numbers and opportunities for personalized learning within classroom settings.

Figure 4. 1

Schoolhouse Model Describing Multilayered Inclusive Setting System.



Note. On the Foundation Floor, administrative support articulates the inclusive vision that is translated into policy and practice. The First Floor represents collaborative meetings among all stakeholders for alignment and problem-solving. The Second Floor indicates the organizing system and teaching practices used to support academic diversity. The Third Floor focuses on the differentiated pathways used by teachers to accommodate all students in their classrooms. Finally, the Top Floor supports all student achievement and success in inclusive schools. Reprinted with permission from "Leading an Inclusive School: Access and Success for ALL Students", by R. A. Villa and J. S. Thousand. Copyright 2016 by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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Finally, transformational inclusive leaders use continuous reflections and action planning methods with their teams of educators and specialists to make decisions and develop evidence-based practices to support students' needs (Villa & Thousands, 2016).

Authentic Transformational Leaders for Inclusion

As previously mentioned, transformational leadership theory relates to the leadership traits and behaviors which help foster academic diversity. This section briefly explores how learning to lead illustrates a form of transformational learning in various ways, including collaboration and reflection.

As highlighted in Chapter One, the authentic transformational leader has specific attributes and behaviors. According to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), an authentic transformational leader "provides a more reasonable and realistic concept of self—a self that is connected to friends, family, and community whose welfare may be more important to oneself than one's own" (p.186). On the other hand, Tonkin (2013) differentiates between authentic and transformational leadership. Born from transformational leadership, authentic leadership is a trait-based type of leadership that allows the leaders to use their positive psychological capacities and organizational skills to foster the positive self-development of their followers. Research has revealed four authentic leadership dimensions: self-awareness, relational transparency, ethics and morals, and balanced processing (Luthans & Avolio, 2009).

Self-awareness occurs when a leader is being mindful of their world as it relates to their strengths and weaknesses, and their self-improvement to better serve. Relational transparency relates to revealing one's authentic self to others, which depends on effective communication and appropriate emotion management. Ethics is the internalized moral standards within the leaders that control their behavior and actions; it is controlled by the internal self, not guided by the

group or society. Finally, balanced processing helps the leader to be objective when analyzing information before making decisions and consulting with others to challenge the leaders' beliefs (Tonkin, 2013; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Authentic leadership requires conscious and deliberate efforts to achieve. The essence of authentic leadership is emotional intelligence, the first and most important step on this journey is gaining self-awareness (George, 2016). However, the concept of authenticity is usually misunderstood by followers and leaders themselves or it may seem hard for some leaders to adopt. Authentic leaders' deeds must reflect their thoughts. Also, an authentic leader influences their followers by creating a positive social bond with them (Goffee & Jones, 2005; Ibarra, 2015).

As a behavior-based leadership, transformational leadership involves four key aspects to ensure ideal actualization in any organization. Bass and Riggio (2006) state that transformational leaders inspire followers to achieve remarkable results and prepare them to be leaders. According to the authors, the transformational leader is a role model to influence followers, to help them realize their shared goals. Leading the team members to learn by doing gives them the privilege of continuous professional development and improvement, allowing reflection on their mistakes and operations without blaming. Also, a balance between meaningful and challenging tasks helps the followers to have a sense of self-motivation. The transformational leaders act as a coach and mentor to facilitate learning and endorse empowerment.

Emotional management and feelings play a fundamental part in transformational leadership (George, 2000; Kerr, Garvin, Heaton, & Boyle, 2006). Numerous characteristics of EI foster transformational leadership (Sosik & Megarian, 1999). First, empathy may be necessary for transformational leaders, who need to have individual consideration for followers and the capacity to understand their own feelings and those of others as well. Second, when the leaders

display emotional management, followers are confident to express opinions and to generate new ideas. Third, self-awareness, being responsive to others' needs and having a sense of purpose are traits that characterize transformational leaders. Finally, emotions and morals are two key components that motivate and inspire followers (George, 2000; Harms & Credé, 2010).

An exploratory study conducted on the relationship between EI and transformational leadership (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000) found an association between them, in the three following aspects: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. Exhibiting these traits increased the leadership's efficiency in the workplace and is considered essential for communicating visionary goals (e.g., self-confidence, self-awareness, transparency, and empathy). To conclude, EI, as measured by a person's ability to monitor and manage emotions within oneself and in others, maybe an underlying competency of transformational leadership (Modassir & Singh, 2008). In the following discussion of authentic and transformational leadership, the researcher further examines the type of leadership that supports academic diversity in schools.

Effective leadership demands knowledgeable and responsive principals to govern, implement, and monitor the provision of academic diversity. Principals play a significant role in supporting the implementation of inclusive programs (Furney, Aiken, Hasazi, & Clark Keefe, 2005; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002). In a small-scale, mixed-method case study of a school with more than 50% of its population from a high poverty background, 16% of the students were diagnosed with learning difficulties (Waldron et al., 2011). The researchers investigated the effectiveness of the inclusive school, reporting that the school represented an inclusive setting that was supported by a shared vision and shared data-driven decisions, highlighting the collaboration between the principal and teachers. Moreover, a

high-quality professional development plan was a key requirement. Despite the high incidence of students with learning disabilities, the school's scores on the state tests were high.

Through observation, staff interview data, and examination of school documents to understand the principal's role in this inclusive school, Waldron et al. (2011) concluded that leadership accountability helped students with disabilities and those who struggled to meet state standards. The triangulated data highlighted five themes that described a shared leadership style between the principal and teachers. Shared leadership sets the school direction, redesigns the school organization, improves working conditions for school staff, provides high-quality professional development, and ensures that data are used to drive decision-making. Being the agent of change is the role of the principal in a transformational problem-solving model (Hallinger, 1992). The study concluded that investing in capacity building, developing a data-driven system, and ensuring the optimal utilization of school resources helped the principal to establish an effective shared leadership to support academic diversity (DeMatthews, 2015a; Waldron et al., 2011).

Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) conducted a similar qualitative case study, which depicted a well-rounded image of an inclusive school leader. Despite the focus on one case, the researchers provided a clear reflection of the principal's best practices in an inclusive school. They used in-depth observation and phenomenological interviews, which involve understanding the essence of a phenomenon by examining the principal's views (Schutt, 2015). The interviews revealed several characteristics which helped to develop the school's inclusive setting, such as investment in teachers' professional growth by building a strong, trusting environment where teachers' opinions count, and protecting teachers from external pressures (e.g., parental complaints). Finally, the principal provided opportunities for teacher leadership in three

significant ways: displaying trust, considering ideas and problems, and avoiding favoritism. These traits characterize the leadership style of an ethical leader. The mutual trust between the ethical leader and their followers is related positively to job attitudes and satisfaction. Trust is a key leadership trait that positively affects the work environment; employees have positive job attitudes and performance because of that trust (Thomas & Feldman, 2015).

A significant relationship between leadership, organizational change, and entrepreneurship is marked by transformational leadership theories. Transformational leaders, 'are by nature entrepreneurial and change-oriented' (Conger, & Kanungo, 1998, p. 133). Galloway and Isimaru (2015) proposed transformative social justice educational leadership to support an equity-based framework and standards for all students. Ishimaru and Galloway (2014) supported the model of shared instructional leadership indicating how the distribution of leadership contributes to an effective inclusive educational program for cognitively diverse learners through a shared vision and collaborative decision-making (DeMatthews, 2015a; Galloway & Isimaru, 2015; Wallace, 2013).

Social cognitive neuroscience examines how leaders understand others and themselves. Social cognitive neuroscience is the study of the brain's processes which allow people to understand their own feelings and those of others and to effectively navigate their social contexts (Lieberman, 2007). Through self-awareness comes self-regulation and control. According to Waldman, Balthazard, and Peterson (2011), social cognitive neuroscience is linked with leadership behaviors such as emotional management, ethical reasoning, and data-driven decision-making process. Knowing oneself involves four social cognitive neuroscience strategies: self-recognition, self-reflection, self-knowledge, and self-control, which enhance the sense-making process for ethical decision-making (Thiel, Bagdasarov, Harkrider, Johnson, & Mumford, 2012).

The capacity for self-regulation and controlling emotional impulses is critical to the achievement of long-term personal and social goals such as the leaders' job-promotion. Social cognitive neuroscience is a dynamic new area of research; it may sharpen leaders and educators' skills through its cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Lieberman, 2007; Gerdes, Segal, Jackson, & Mullins, 2011).

In a brain-based study related to social cognitive neuroscience, the SCARF model encourages leadership influences in a collaborative and social context (Rock & Cox, 2012). SCARF stands for status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. The five domains of the SCARF model are based on the realization of threats and rewards in the brain to influencing human behavior. According to Rock (2008), social needs are essential to the human brain as food and water. Connecting theory to practice and real-life situation, the neuro-leadership model attempts to improve leaders' competencies by understanding and modifying the leaders and staff's behavior in social situations (Rock, 2008). This model raises leaders' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses; thus, it helps to create reflective and collaborative leaders.

From the perspective of social cognitive theory, leadership that establishes such norms also serves as a form of social influence that can positively impact collective efficacy beliefs. Therefore, schools become more inclusive as they become more collaborative (Guzman, & Schofield, 1995; Marston et al., 2003; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Relational networks in schools facilitate dialogue and developmental discourse among different stakeholders (e.g., teachers, administrators, students, and families). As social capital grows, the staff works together for the benefit of all learners, including those with disabilities as well as others at risk (DiPaola, & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Effective communication and trust help staff to share knowledge and

skills about effective ways to serve all students; the synergy of teamwork exists, and all participants benefit (Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite, & Wilcox, 2015; Villa & Thousand, 2016).

Synthesis of Intervention Literature

The literature review for the proposed intervention examined current western professional development programs for inclusive leadership. The focus on western programs is necessary due to the absence of literature on inclusive leadership training in Egypt. Besides, these western programs provide unique insights into intervention designs. In addition to professional development programs for inclusive education, this literature review discusses principal standards and collaboration for academic diversity.

Professional Development for Inclusive Leadership

Globally, efforts to reform school leadership preparation programs span more than three decades. In the 1980s, the United States initiated a paradigm shift in leadership preparation programs (National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, 1987). In the mid-1980s, a new perspective was introduced in response to principals' accountability toward student achievement, with a shift from the traditional operational management of school systems to an instructional leadership model (Hallinger, 2003). Despite the change from the managerial to the instructional leadership model for school principals (Perez et al., 2011), leadership preparation programs remained inadequate for promoting an instructional emphasis in an inclusive setting (Lasky & Karge, 2006; McHatton et al., 2010; Wallace, 2016).

In the 2000s, the era of accountability shed light on the importance of alternative preparation and licensure for school leaders, highlighting the importance of effective leadership to balance the organizational and instructional responsibilities of school principals (Kottkamp, 2010; Wallace, 2016). In 2003, the Wallace Foundation reported that 67% of the surveyed

principals expressed concern regarding typical leadership programs in graduate schools of education. The school principals explained that these programs are often out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run a school. This study underlined the need for leadership development and updated principal standards in the US (Wallace, 2003).

Thirteen years later, the Wallace Foundation Report (2016) showed that leaders and superintendents were still dissatisfied with the quality of principal preparation programs as they lacked a fair reflection of the principal's real job. The survey of 408 superintendents from 42 states indicated that four out of five (80 %) called for improvement in principal preparation programs and partnerships between universities and districts (Wallace, 2016). Since school leaders are responsible for all students' achievement, they often felt unprepared to manage special programs. Goor, Schwenn, and Boyer (1997) described the essential beliefs, knowledge, and dispositions that principals must have to support learning for all students. The researchers' stance demanded that leaders gain familiarity with specific timelines as well as procedural requirements of the laws governing special populations to ensure that special programs are compatible with legislation and aligned with best practices (Goor et al., 1997).

Furthermore, Christensen, Robertson, Williamson, and Hunter (2013) investigated school principals' understanding of what preparation programs should include in terms of knowledge associated with the success of students with diverse learning needs. The survey includes 22 Likert-designed and two open-ended questions to offer a list of recommendations for program improvement. Approximately 87% of surveyed principals indicated a need for knowledge of legal guidelines for disciplining students with disabilities. Moreover, 89% of the 64 respondents rated the adaptation of the general curriculum to accommodate the educational needs of diverse learners with a high level of importance. Another area considered was knowledge about how the

failure to implement testing accommodations may negatively affect students and overall test scores for a school. The respondents (81%) indicated that this information was of the highest importance to be included in principal preparation programs (Christensen et al., 2013). The gap found in leadership preparation programs in western empirical research coincided with conditions of leadership preparation programs in the Egyptian setting (Ghamrawi, 2015; OECD 2015; MOE, 2014). The following section discusses western research literature on leadership preparation programs and types of leadership, which promote inclusion of academic diversity in detail, to pave the way for reform in the Egyptian setting.

Inclusive preparation programs. In the US, the function of the school principal changed to include responsibility and accountability in the inclusive setting after the No Child Left Behind Act (Davidson & Algozzine, 2002; ISLLC Standards, 2008). Before the inclusive legislative acts, Davis (1980) surveyed 345 principals to examine the amount of special education coursework received during principal preparation programs. Half of the respondents indicated that no formal coursework was available. Thirty years later, the literature reported similar findings (Angelle & Bilton, 2009; Lynch, 2012; McHatton et al., 2010). School principals are still reporting the mismatch between their current job requirements and the university-led preparation programs to support academic diversity (Rand Corporation, 2019).

After scrutinizing principal preparation content, findings from several studies have identified the significance of infused courses to support academic diversity rather than presenting them as a stand-alone certificate enhancing leaders' knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Cooner, Tochterman, & Garrison-Wade,2004; McHatton et al., 2010). The models discussed in these studies attempted to offer a practical structure and theoretical framework for inclusive leadership

preparation programs. The next section presents the recommended content for inclusive leadership programs (Crockett, 2002; Lynch, 2012), including practicum opportunities.

Davidson and Algozzine (2002) revealed the challenges that face leadership preparation programs to support special education in the regular classroom. The cross-sectional survey reflected 286 principals' perceptions toward special education laws and procedures. Although almost 75% of the participants reported basic to moderate knowledge of special education legislation and procedures, only 34% stated a greater need for training. Furthermore, 46.7% of participants expressed their dissatisfaction with administrative training about special education law (Davidson & Algozzine, 2002). This study coincides with the academic diversity advocacy and decision-making process in the Egyptian context, where the administration ignores the need to be knowledgeable about legislation and procedures related to managing the identification and provisions of special education law (OECD, 2015).

In another study examining administrator perception of preparation programs, the researchers used mixed methods to explore the efficacy of a special education preparation program using focus group interviews and a survey (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007). The 124 administrators in an Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies program evaluated the effectiveness of preparation programs enhancing inclusive practices. They reflected on the skills and competencies needed to manage inclusive settings. The participants (40%) identified a gap in their understanding of the legal issues related to special education. The study indicated that 28% of the respondents self-reported a lack of competencies to provide constructive feedback and mentorship to special educators. Moreover, 28% of the administrators reported their limited capacity to generate solutions in resource management. Current and future administrators clearly stated their need to lead instruction for all learners. The findings suggested that preparation

programs should include content on various topics such as special education law and optimal utilization of human and instructional resources of both special and general education. Moreover, managing discipline issues for all students is another area of concern for preparation programs. Such requirements called for major adjustments of principal preparation standards to accommodate their on-the-job demands.

Principal standards. As previously mentioned, effective inclusive leadership requires an adequate understanding of the legal implications of academic diversity to enhance educational placement decisions and provision academically diverse students. It is worth noting that both the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and the curriculum guidelines for school administration, set by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), neglected expectations for administering inclusive programs to serve all students (Crockett, 2002; Wallace 2016). However, the ISLLC (2008) defined the most needed on-the-job training for school leaders and principals to guide state policy (Wallace, 2013).

Galloway and Ishimaru (2015) highlighted the current and unresolved tension between on-the-job demands and the standards measurement of school leadership performance. In the ISLLC (2015) standards, the limitation of academic diversity-focused standards prevails. The standards include (a) the school's shared vision; (b) support instruction; (c) building the school capacity; (d) cultivating an inclusive environment; (e) parental involvement; (f) and coordinating and managing organization and resources. Therefore, the researchers suggested a radical shift in standards-based frameworks for leaders. They prepared a set of equity-focused standards for school leaders that would facilitate significant changes in inclusive leadership preparation programs, training, and evaluation. Leaders must be engaged in self-reflection, model core values, and take risks by putting themselves on the line in pursuing equity. They suggested

internship opportunities that would best support leaders' development and learning and help ensure high-quality leadership practices (Galloway & Isimaru, 2015).

After training that includes clinical experience, leaders can better cope with authentic and real-world challenges of practice under the supervision of their mentors (Cooner et al., 2004; Crockett, 2002; Galloway & Isimaru, 2015). Leaders develop staff and oversee curriculum design to ensure accessibility for academic diversity in ways that meet the needs of all students. Examining barriers to accessibility, on the school and class levels, leaders offer innovative solutions to some obstacles that may hinder student achievement and success (e.g., student and teacher placement, allocation of resources). Galloway and Isimaru (2015) highlighted the limited reference to a caring and inclusive setting for every child. The ISLLC (2015) Standards Four also ignored the idea of social justice in education. Ishimaru & Galloway (2014) suggested equity-focused leadership standards as they emphasize social justice and a transformative type of leadership for academic diversity.

Collaboration. According to the Council for Exceptional Children (2015), educators who work with students with academic diversity must have a deep understanding of the significance of collaboration among all stakeholders. School administration, teachers, specialists, and community use collaboration to promote an inclusive school culture, share a vision and practices, resolve conflicts, and build consensus (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2015). Blanton, Pugach and Florian (2011) called for teachers' preparation to foster collaboration among different stakeholders. This type of collaboration among stakeholders leads to the development of a culture responsive to students' needs (DeMatthews, 2014). The role of leadership is not exclusive regarding hiring, budgeting, and evaluating staff and programs. The principal's role is to build school policies and procedures to promote opportunities for collaboration, co-teaching,

and co-planning; they also catalyze teacher collaboration (Villa & Thousand, 2016). Leaders are crucial in providing support for the time commitment needed for collaboration (Goddard et al., 2015).

Different types of collaboration are necessary to design, implement, and improve inclusive systems and programs at the school level (Hines, 2008). Research reveals the importance of a Community of Practice (COP) and a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to support academic diversity (Hines, 2008; DeMatthews, 2015b). The former is voluntary—built by educators and practitioners as a joined-forces systematic way to share practices and to collaboratively plan and design instruction for academic diversity (Hines, 2008). The PLC helps leaders and selected educators and specialists to also share a vision and practices to inform data-driven decisions (DeMatthews, 2014; DeMatthews, 2015b). It is an on-going process where educators work collaboratively employing a reflective cycle of inquiry to achieve better results for the students they serve (Dufour, Dufour, Many, & Mattos, 2016). Hallam, Smith, Hite, and Wilcox (2015) discussed the role of school principals in building professional learning communities (PLCs) that are recognized as improving the quality of teaching and contributing to sustainable progress in student learning. An effective PLC requires the collaborative efforts of administrators and teams of teachers; the degree of trust within the school's collaborative culture significantly affects PLC effectiveness relative to the performance of students.

In 1995, the National School Reform Faculty program introduced the concept of Critical Friend Groups (CFG) which combined academic research with pedagogical practices (Fahey, 2011; Swaffield & MacBeath, 2005). A PLC is based on trust and confidentiality to support educators through collaboration and problem-solving techniques. The CFG model was designed to build more reflective, collaborative, learning-focused schools through ongoing learning

communities, by depending on the intentional use of structured protocols and skills to facilitate effective leadership provision (Fahey, 2011). The purpose of this group is to build trust among the participants so they can reduce teacher and administrator isolation, extend distributed leadership, and have time for deep reflection and strategic planning using critical problem-solving techniques (Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014).

Summary of Proposed Intervention

The development of a university-led inclusive leadership intervention aimed at supporting school leaders and educators by providing the knowledge, competencies, and dispositions needed to design and implement inclusive systems and programs for students with diverse learning needs through completion of inclusive leadership coursework and a PLC that is driven by authentic needs. Developing the school leaders' capacity to enhance school support systems and teachers' pedagogical practices is a critical step towards educational reform in Egypt (Badran & Toprak, 2020; OECD, 2015). Strengthening inclusive leadership knowledge and competencies may highlight positive teaching practices for academic diversity. The inclusive leadership intervention suggests the content and practices needed to sharpen the leaders' competencies to support academic diversity in Egypt. At the current time, students with diverse learning needs deserve knowledgeable school leaders and responsive teachers to their needs to enhance all students' achievement.

Building a school system to support academic diversity needs an authentic transformational leader who endorses a shared vision, builds school capacity, acts as a role model, enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and adopts a collaborative reflective culture at school (Crippen, 2012). The school leader needs to acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support all students' needs within inclusive contexts. The school leader

is the catalyst for the development of PLC, which provides a strong collaborative opportunity among teachers and administrators to support evidence-based decision making and, thus, high-quality education for all students. The proposed inclusive leadership intervention has two distinct structures: theoretical components and practical components.

The STAR Model: Inclusive Leadership Curriculum

The Star Model (Appendix H) proposed a five-core principles framework of the preparation program for responsive school leaders. First, inclusive leaders develop the ethical practice by respecting differences and supporting complexities for the student's benefit (Crockett, 2002). Moreover, these leaders must be attentive and responsive to students' behavioral and educational needs, to enhance learning. Then, inclusive legislation and its financial and pedagogical implications are essential areas for leadership preparation programs. Incorporating special and gifted education practices into the general curriculum is one of the steps toward excellence, equity, and high-quality education for all students (Henderson & Jarvis, 2016). Last, interpersonal skills to foster internal and external partnerships with all stakeholders and affiliations support inclusive education for all students. The Star Model offers a conceptual foundation for preparation programs and infused courses that develop school leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions, to ensure legally fair decisions and meaningful instruction in inclusive schools (Crockett, 2002).

Lynch (2012) suggested six principles for an inclusive leadership preparation program to promote accountability. This program endorses fundamental knowledge of legal aspects, inclusive setting operations, and accessibility to general curricula. The inclusion law has been a long-neglected area in university-based administrator training programs; moreover, it has been strangely absent in administrator preparation programs that embrace a social justice model of

leadership (Pazey, Cole & Gracia 2015). Acquiring a functional knowledge of inclusion and new trends in inclusive education helps the school principal to support inclusive instruction and an inclusive environment for all students.

PLC: Critical Friends Groups

The practical training of school leaders and administrators should focus on collaboration and problem-solving techniques, with an emphasis on inclusive practices for decision-making using administrative dilemmas and case studies from their schools. This structure helps leaders to offer effective and constructive feedback to their followers as they critically examine school dilemmas. The inclusive leadership preparation intervention offers an opportunity for continuous development through building a PLC.

In conclusion, the development of a university-led inclusive leadership intervention might enhance the school leaders' knowledge, skills, and disposition for academic diversity in Egyptian schools. The intervention provides intensive coursework about inclusive education and authentic transformational leadership for academic diversity. Also, it discusses ways to implement systematic support for students with diverse learning needs. Building school leaders' capacity to be reflective practitioners and inclusive leaders might help to provide high-quality services to students with diverse learning needs. The legal foundation to serve academic diversity in regular schools exists (OECD, 2015; Parnell, 2017). The need to equip school leaders with the necessary inclusive knowledge and reflective skills paves the way to translate the Egyptian national vision and policies into practices to support all students' achievement.

Chapter Four

Intervention to Prepare Inclusive Leaders to Support Academic Diversity

The needs assessment study revealed important information about the underlying causes of the inadequate level of services to accommodate students with learning difficulties as well as gifted students in two international schools in Egypt. The needs assessment study was designed to explore teachers' practices, leadership practices, and school and national policies that govern inclusive education for academic diversity in Egypt. The findings indicated that teachers have a positive disposition towards differentiated instruction for students with diverse learning needs; however, they show less confidence to accommodate the needs of students with learning differences. They also reported the absence of a whole-school support system, including the role of the instructional leader for academic diversity, which could enhance the uptake of differentiated instructional practices.

These results from participating teachers were confirmed by owners and principals regarding school leaders' qualifications and recruitment criteria. Their credentials included no certification relative to inclusion or differentiated instruction, and, therefore, Egyptian school leaders are unlikely to have had professional preparation programs to support special and gifted education. Furthermore, school principals reported that the imbalance between their managerial and instructional roles at school made them unable to support teachers' practices for differentiated instruction. However, the interviews with policy advisers confirmed the presence of a strong legislative foundation through ministerial decrees and articles in the Arab Republic of Egypt's Constitution supporting inclusive education for academic diversity. One policy adviser reported the absence of an implementation plan to translate the policy into practices and procedures at the school level.

Despite the positive attitudes and the legislative foundation for academic diversity, the school principal's role as an implementer of the national policies and support for teachers was absent in the national discourse and literature review. This intervention aimed to build the capacity of school leaders who are important implementers of the national policy supporting special and gifted education (OECD, 2015; MOE, 2014). The context of the intervention consisted of inclusive leadership training (e.g., special, and gifted education and differentiated instruction) targeting senior and middle administrators in two Egyptian international schools. The intervention was designed to develop and support the leaders' knowledge about special and gifted education; additionally, it aimed to build reflective collaborative practitioners who implement authentic transformational and shared leadership practices to meet the needs of academically diverse students in Egyptian international schools. The inclusive leadership training sessions focused on the following areas: (a) types of leadership promoting special and gifted education and differentiated instruction; (b) evidence-based school systems serving students with diverse learning needs; (c) evidence-based programs serving students with diverse learning needs; (d) PLCs supporting inclusive school leaders' knowledge and competencies; and (e) action planning and teacher teaming. Appendix L includes the syllabus for the intervention course.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of an inclusive leadership intervention on school leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions about inclusive leadership, and on their understanding of how to implement school support systems based on a tiered system of support. The study also investigated the leaders' perceptions of authentic leadership for academic

diversity, to expand upon currently limited research on inclusive leadership. This study was guided by the following research questions, including both process and outcome questions.

RQ1: What was the delivered inclusive leadership training and to what extent was it implemented with fidelity?

RQ2: What were the school leaders' experiences related to completing inclusive leadership training?

RQ3: To what extent does the inclusive leadership intervention improve the school leaders' knowledge and skills about inclusive education principles and practices?

RQ4: What are the school leaders' perceptions about authentic leadership?

Research Design

This university-based inclusive leadership intervention used a convergent parallel design with a mixed-method research approach to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention. In a convergent parallel design, the data were collected and triangulated concurrently, giving the same weight to quantitative and qualitative data during the collection and analysis phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The design also allowed an appropriate counterfactual condition, comparing the same participants at two points in time, before and after the intervention, using a pretest/posttest knowledge test, which is important in the absence of a comparison group (Schutt, 2015). This exploratory research design allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of an under-researched phenomenon, in this case, Egyptian inclusive leadership and provided the initial groundwork using quantitative and qualitative data to inform future research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Moreover, the convergent design increased the potential for greater validity of the study, considering the small sample size (n = 9).

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation is defined as a systematic way to monitor the efficiency and fidelity of the implementation process to ensure that the project's activities are carried out as planned (Stufflebeam, 2003). Program implementation plans support the researcher to carry out their intended activities in an intentional way (Baranowski, 2000). To avoid any inconsistencies between the intended program and the program as implemented, process evaluation includes a comprehensive description of the structure, function, and operation of the program's components (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). The following sections discuss the implementation plan and measures, which are presented in the logic model (Appendix I). This model outlines the intervention inputs, outputs of activities, and short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. An intervention is considered to have high fidelity if the core components of the intervention are implemented correctly. The process evaluation used five criteria for measuring fidelity of implementation: (a) adherence, (b) dose, (c) quality of delivery, and (d) participant responsiveness (O'Donnell, 2008).

Adherence. Dusenbury et al. (2003) identify adherence as the consistency between the intended plan and the actual implementation process. The intended plan focused on training school leaders to gain the knowledge and skills needed to support teachers' differentiated instruction practices and students with diverse learning needs. The fieldnotes composed after every session were considered as an indicator of the intervention's adherence.

Dosage. Dose refers to the number of sessions completed and the duration of the sessions. The intervention had six sessions and each session was divided into asynchronous (four hours) and synchronous (two hours) sessions (see Appendix V). The CFG training took place during the second, third, and fourth sessions. The researcher kept an attendance log sheet shared

with the Graduate School of Education programs officer to keep track of the participants' attendance.

Quality of delivery. The quality of delivery in this study refers to the effectiveness of the researchers' instruction, including the course sessions and CFG meetings. The instructor, who is the researcher, is an expert in inclusive education based on education and years of experience working as a special/gifted education coordinator and school principal. The course plan was approved by the Graduate School of Education Interim Dean at the AUC and the Dissertation Advisory Committee at Johns Hopkins University. Quality of delivery was assessed through an examination of fieldnotes and results analysis from the Learner Evaluation of Instruction Form completed by the participants after the training.

Participant responsiveness. Participant responsiveness refers to the level at which the participants are engaged and involved in the intervention, as determined by how the school leaders view their participation in the training (Dusenbury et al., 2003). The intervention was designed to allow multiple opportunities to promote participants' engagement through activities. Activities were created to engage participants and to enhance their motivation. Participants were given the opportunity to connect their knowledge with practice, to discuss their real-life experiences and challenges, and to voice their thoughts and dispositions toward inclusive education in Egypt. Since the leaders' voice is essential in adapting and improving content and course activities, the school leaders reflected on their understanding and learning progress and articulated their own professional goals and at the end of three sessions and during their final presentations, respectively. Qualitative data were collected via reflective logs and presentations to capture their understanding, insights, and personal experiences. Quantitative data collected in the form of attendance logs and Learner Evaluation Forms reflect their level of engagement.

Outcome Evaluation Design

A mixed-method research study involves using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to respond to research questions including data collection methods and data analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Not only does mixed-methods research have the potential to provide a greater understanding of complex phenomena related to inclusive leadership in Egypt, but it also helps the researcher to better understand the conditions under which an intervention is effective. The researcher collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the outcomes of the inclusive leadership intervention (see Appendix M). This approach helps to triangulate, corroborate, and validate the data for early improvement plans (Chatterji, 2016; Sandelowski, 2000). According to the logic model (see Appendix I) for the inclusive leadership intervention, the Egyptian school leaders who receive the training are knowledgeable enough to design a support system to enhance academic diversity in their schools (short-term goal). Furthermore, these school leaders can support teacher's differentiated instructional practices (medium-term goal) and the achievement of students with diverse learning needs (long-term goal).

Methods

The context of this university-based study focused on five Egyptian international schools where school leaders (n = 9) fill senior and middle management and teaching positions. This section outlines the participants, measures, and procedures used in this study (see Appendix M).

Participants

The participants were included based on two criteria: 1) experience in educational leadership and management and teaching in international schools in Egypt; and 2) English proficiency of English Intermediate User, as indicated on the AUC's School of Continuing

Education Standardized English Proficiency Test (SEPT). SEPT exam cut-off score for acceptance in this program was B1A (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Applicants who hold degrees from an accredited English-language university may be exempted from the SEPT exam. The application requested several demographic data (e.g., contact, nationality, and gender), years of experience, and educational certification to date in detail (e.g., the title of certificate/training, length (in hours), date and location). No gifted or special education certificate or preparation was needed to attend this training.

The participants worked in five different international schools, which have similar characteristics to those described in the needs assessment study. Two international schools out of the five schools paid the training tuition for their six leaders. The remaining four participants worked in three different international schools. However, one of these participants dropped out after the first session due to professional commitments. Table 4.1 presents the demographic data for the nine participants. The group included two male leaders and seven female leaders. Also, most of the participants (78%) have had more than 10 years of teaching experience in international schools in Egypt; however, their years of experience as school leaders varied among the group.

Table 4. 1

The demographic data of the participants

Item	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender		
Female	7	77.8
Male	2	22.2
Years of Teaching		
1-5 years	1	11.1
5-10 years	1	11.1
More than 10 years	7	77.8
Years of Leadership		
1-5 years	3	33.3
5-10 years	3	33.3
More than 10 years	3	33.3

Note: n = 9.

Measures and Instrumentation

This intervention aimed to evaluate participants' experiences of the inclusive leadership intervention and the level of knowledge and competencies gained by the participating school leaders in inclusive leadership training. This section describes the instrumentation and data sources, including fieldnotes, Learner Evaluation of Instruction [LEI] Form, focus group interview protocol, reflective logs, Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test, and Authentic Leadership Questionnaire [ALQ].

Fieldnotes. Fieldnotes are a method used in narrative inquiry when the researcher collects data by observing the participants in a practical setting (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The fieldnotes allowed the researcher to monitor the fidelity of implementation and facilitate the development of the research. In the inclusive leadership training, the fieldnotes had two sections: one section to describe the events, behaviors, and words of each session, and another section to reflect on the session (see Appendix N). The researcher recorded the events that took place

during the training sessions, including reconstruction of the events with the researcher's interpretation, as described by Connelly and Clandinin (1990). The researcher used the break time and immediately after training time to fill in the fieldnotes sheets.

LEI form. This standard survey is designed by the School of Continuing Education (SCE), AUC, to evaluate the effectiveness of coursework delivery and quality of instruction in all non-academic educational services provided by SCE. This survey was used to evaluate the learning environment, learning outcomes, instructional delivery, and instructor's knowledge and practices. The 24-item survey had four sections: Learning Environment (4 items), Learning Outcome (2 items), Instructional Delivery (10 items), Course Online Component (5 items), and Overall Performance (1 item) (see Appendix O). The participants answered items using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Additionally, the survey had three open-ended questions, for example, "based on this experience, would you be interested to take other courses that are taught in an online format?" and "What would you recommend for improving the program?".

Sample items in the Learning Environment section included, "I experienced an interactive learning environment", and "I feel I am treated with respect". Sample items in the Learning Outcome section contained, "I find the course tasks/activities relevant to the learning outcome", and "I will be able to use the learning outcomes of the course as stated in the course outline/syllabus". Sample items in the Instructional Delivery section included, "The instructor is well organized/prepared", "The instructor always starts a class session on time", and "There are varied tasks/activities that help me master the course content". Course Online Component section included items "Online components are well integrated in the course", and "Online materials and activities are easy to access".

Focus group interview protocol. The interview protocol was intended to capture participants' perceptions of and understanding about inclusive leadership and school support systems and their experience during the training (see Appendix P). Examples of the focus group interview questions were, "How do you identify weak students in your classroom?" "How do you identify gifted students in your classroom?" and "How do you allow/ implement the support system in your school?" "What are the types of accommodations/enrichment opportunities you use that support their learning in the school?". Different questions explored the participants' experiences about the intervention, as well. Examples were "How do you think that this inclusive leadership intervention helps you, as a leader, to implement system/program to support students with learning needs in your school? and "Do you think that this course helps you to design a support system in your school? If yes, what is your first step?".

Reflective logs. The reflective logs captured the participants' insights about their learning and practices concerning the following topics: 1) inclusive leadership for academic diversity; 2) systems and programs promoting academic diversity; and 3) PLCs for academic diversity. For example, the first session's reflective question focused on practitioners' attitudes and perceptions about leadership: "How do you think that authentic and transformational leadership will help to build an inclusive environment for students with learning needs in your school?". The third session's question centered on designing support systems for students with diverse learning needs: "How would you plan to implement a support system/programs to support academic diversity in your school?". Finally, the fifth session's question spotlighted the importance of the PLCs promoting academic diversity in the school setting: "How do you think you can establish a PLC at your workspace?" (see Appendix Q).

Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership. The Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership was a researcher-designed measure to assess the school leaders' knowledge about inclusive leadership that they learned from the program (see Appendix R). The course plan identified the key concepts and principles of inclusive leadership and inclusive education, which served as a basis for the design of this knowledge test to help ensure content and construct validity. The knowledge test had eight open-ended questions that were intended to explore the school leaders' knowledge of the following topics: leadership styles, systems of support, differentiated instruction for academic diversity, teacher teaming, professional learning community, and the cycle of improvement. For example, questions about leadership were: "Define the term leadership in your own words". "Describe the types and traits of a) transformational, b) instructional, c) authentic, and d) shared leadership". "What is inclusive leadership?" "What are the necessary traits (personal and professional) promoting inclusive leadership?".

ALQ. The ALQ self-assessment was used as a reflective tool focused on leaders' practices, which may help inform the leaders about the gaps in their practices (Walumbwa et al., 2008) (see Appendix S). The 16-item multidimensional ALQ was comprised of four constructs. Leader self-awareness (4 items) referred to making sense of the world and how related it is to oneself; moreover, it described one's awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses. Items referring to self-awareness were "I can list my three greatest weaknesses" and "I seek others' opinions before making up my mind". Relational transparency (5 items) referred to sharing information about oneself with another person to gain their trust. For example, these items included, "I rarely present a 'false' front to others", and "I admit my mistakes to others". An internalized moral perspective (4 items) referred to a process of self-regulation that was governed by one's internal standards. An example of an item on this subscale was, "My actions

reflect my core values". The balanced processing subscale (3 items) measured the degree to which an individual analyzes all relevant data before coming to a decision. An item on this subscale was, "I seek others' opinions before making up my mind". Respondents indicated their agreement to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

No study has reported psychometric properties for validation of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire in the Egyptian context. However, the multistage development of the original questionnaire provided a substantial foundation of reliability, validity, and cultural transferability of the ALQ. The research was considered across a wide range of countries including the United States, China, Kenya, New Zealand, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Iran, Taiwan, and Canada (Datta, 2015; Roof, 2104; Walumbwa et al., 2008). All studies that used ALQ, in different contexts and languages confirmed good reliability using the internal consistency approach only. Several studies reflected good alpha estimates. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .634 to .807 (Datta, 2015). Reliability between .6 and .7 may be accepted; however, it requires the other indicators of a model's construct validity to be good (Hair et al., 2006). Cervo, Mónico, Santos, Hutz, and Pais (2016) reported good Cronbach alphas and composite reliability were good as they were above .70 (e.g., .74,.79, .73, .81).

Procedure

In this intervention, it was essential to make sure that each school leader had a chance to achieve a deeper and more accurate understanding of the essential components of inclusive leadership best practices. This section describes the procedural steps taken to recruit participants; it also explains the content of the university-based intervention.

Participant recruitment. The Communication Office of the School of Continuing Education (SCE-AUC) announced the training in August 2020 via their website and social media, using a flyer (see Appendix U). Based on this announcement, the researcher contacted two international schools in New Cairo to make sure that a group of leaders who fit the previously described criteria would enroll in the training. The two international schools responded and funded six participants. Another four participants called the AUC office and showed interest in joining the training. The ten participants filled in an online application. The researcher contacted participants to explain the purpose of the training and the letter of consent was signed by each participant and sent to the researcher's email. Upon receiving the letter of consent, the link to the Pre-assessment of the Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership was sent via email to all participants.

Inclusive school leadership intervention components. The inclusive leadership intervention had two distinct structures: theoretical and practical. Leaders learned about the legislative, organizational, instructional, and collaborative aspects of special and gifted education. The practicum focused on building a PLC to foster collaboration and problem-solving techniques for decision making, using dilemmas and case studies (Dufour, et al., 2016).

Course work. The materials for the intervention were based on the Professional Educator Diploma (PED) curriculum taught outline at the Graduate School of Education (GSE), AUC (see Appendix L). The materials were developed by the researcher who works as an instructor in the GSE/PED, following a literature review of inclusive education, special education, and gifted education. Additionally, the researcher has strong academic and practical backgrounds about academic diversity in Egypt (e.g., she holds a Master of Arts in special education and inclusion, has worked as a special/gifted education coordinator, and cooperated in the design of the

Inclusive Education for Diverse Learner diploma at the AUC, as well as having taught in that diploma in 2014).

The development of the intervention curriculum incorporated Crockett's Star Model components (Crockett, 2002) (Appendix H): ethical and legislative, instructional, organizational, and collaborative leadership. According to the model, inclusive leaders initially develop the ethical practice by respecting differences and support complexities for the student's benefit. Second, they must be attentive and responsive to the students' behavioral and educational needs to enhance learning and to develop systems and programs to support academic diversity. Third, inclusive leaders abide by the legislative actions for inclusive education employing financial and pedagogical implications to support an inclusive environment in their schools. Fourth, integrating special and gifted education practices into the general curriculum promotes excellence, equity, and high-quality education. Finally, inclusive leaders must develop interpersonal skills to foster the development of internal and external partnerships with all stakeholders and affiliations to support inclusive education for all students (Crockett, 2002; DeMatthews, 2015a; Lynch, 2012).

PLC for inclusive leadership. The researcher employed the principles of PLC and CFGs Consultancy Protocols to support academic diversity in Egyptian international schools. Research suggests that a collaborative team of leaders, teachers, and specialists can successfully use a systematic, problem-solving, and data-driven process to address the diverse needs of students (Marston et al., 2003). According to the CFGs Consultancy Protocol (Fahey, 2011), a coach facilitates the sessions. In the present case, I (the researcher) acted as the coach; I was able to facilitate the administrative dilemmas concerning academic diversity in the Egyptian settings due to my professional background and experience in the field of inclusive education. The leaders

signed a confidentiality agreement, and they were oriented with the group's activities such as giving constructive feedback on a problem of practice and discussing sensitive topics and school dilemmas (Fahey, 2011).

Employing the Consultancy CFGs Protocol (see Appendix T), the researcher followed certain procedures. First, the researcher reminded the group of the steps of the Consultancy Protocol before giving a full account of an administrative dilemma based on the topic in hand. After framing the dilemma, the group moved quickly to clarifying questions to establish a common understanding of the dilemma. Building on this reflective practice, the group continued to probe questions to uncover the school culture and leadership practices by questioning assumptions and considering a variety of possibilities. The group restated the dilemma allowing a level of self-knowledge and self-reflection processes to take place. This step depended on the groups' prior experience and understanding of the laws, policies, and procedures characterizing the professional context (Swaffield, 2008).

Reflections are a core activity in the Consultancy Protocol. The participants reflected on the dilemma as well as on the Consultancy Reflective Procedures. The experiential learning was translated into the development of leadership capability activities. A reflection is an engaging tool that can help participants to discover the connections between leadership and learning. Overall, these reflective tools and the ideas underlying them provide a framework for leaders to build a coherent, collaborative system that supports powerful, equitable learning for all students. The coming section describes the sessions in detail.

Due to the global pandemic of Covid-19, the training was delivered online, per the AUC guidelines on online instruction modality since March 2020 (AUC, 2020). The 36-hour intervention used the online modality to deliver the training content. Before the start of the

intervention, I created a website with all materials covered and sent the link to all participants via the WhatsApp group created for the training. The website was created in September to support the learning process and the online training and to ensure the organized and easy accessibility to all the training materials. The website had a homepage, which included a description of the course learning outcome and expectations, key dates for synchronous Zoom live sessions, ways of communication, instructor's biography, rules of netiquette, a video about the flipped class model, and a discussion board using Padlet. The introductory video posted on the homepage welcomed the participants and introduced them to the training and its website.

The website included different sections. First, on the page entitled Session, I uploaded the PowerPoint presentations with an audio recording of each session. The videos on the Session page gave a full description of the topic covered in each session. Before each live session, participants watched the presession videos I recorded and wrote down their questions. Also, I added different questions during the presentations to prepare them for our discussions and Zoom live session activities. Second, postsession instructional videos and readings were uploaded to support their in-depth learning. These pages were entitled "Instructional Videos" and "Readings", respectively. The final page included several resources (e.g., referral forms, IEPs template, action plan template, and the participants' final presentations), which were developed based on the participants' discussion and needs. In each session, the participants explored topics and concepts that helped them to build their knowledge about inclusive education and worked in collaborative teams to implement problem-solving strategies and shared leadership practices.

As previously mentioned, the setting of the intervention was online meetings, using the learning delivery platform Google Site as well as Zoom meeting as a communication platform. Six online sessions, both asynchronous and synchronous, occurred over four weeks targeting

approximately 36 hours of work. As shown in Appendix V, sessions covered five topics: (a) Exploring Beliefs about Leadership styles and traits supporting Academic Diversity, (b) School Systems governing Academic Diversity, (c) Programs Promoting Academic Diversity, (d) Building Professional Learning Community for Academic Diversity, and (e) Action Planning for Academic Diversity. In the last session, the participants presented their potential role as an agent of change in their schools.

Data Collection

As the literature indicates, an effective implementation plan describes the pre-specified sequential steps with a clear beginning point and a final objective (Nelson, Cordray, Hulleman, Darrow, & Sommer, 2014). The researcher took procedural steps to plan and implement the university-based intervention. First, the researcher analyzed several school policies, to assess the overall contextual readiness for academic diversity, and the existing literature, to support the intervention content. Second, a committee made up of the researcher, the dean of the Graduate School of Education (GSE) at AUC, and two AUC professors of practice in GSE was created at AUC (see Appendix J) to assess the needs for inclusive leadership at the university and school levels. They revised the educational leadership Master of Arts courses, which were designed to prepare school principals or directors in K-12 schools. Third, the committee revised the participants' selection criteria, course tuition, admissions application, course content, learning outcome, and activities (see Appendix L). Finally, the intervention delivery was planned to include a range of different learning experiences that encourage collaboration, participant's voice, feedback, and the opportunities for individuals to practice new skills in a real-world context, which are important components outlined in the literature (Hess & Kelly, 2007).

The following section describes the qualitative and quantitative data collection activities, following the timeline given in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Intervention Data Collection Activities and Timeline

Intervention Activity	Description	Timeline and Duration
Fieldnotes	The researcher took notes after each session.	Each of the six sessions over four weeks
LEI Form	The participants filled in this form at the end of the course, following the SCE-AUC protocol for post-course evaluation.	At the end of the course Duration: 20 minutes
Focus Group	The participants participated in a planned discussion intended to elicit their perceptions about inclusive leadership.	Two sessions at the end of the course Duration: 40 minutes, respectively
Reflective Logs	This activity took place during three sessions out of six. The leaders respond to a writing prompt.	On the first, third and fifth sessions Duration: 10 minutes each
Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership	The researcher designed content-based pre- and post-assessment to assess the participants' prior knowledge and post-course-delivery knowledge.	On the first and last sessions Duration: 20 minutes each
ALQ	The ALQ describes the participants' leadership styles and traits and authentic leaders.	On the first session Duration: 10 minutes

Fieldnotes. The researcher took notes during each of the six training sessions. Fieldnotes were collected to capture the learning progress of the school leaders to improve their inclusive knowledge and competencies. After each session, the researcher used the fieldnotes sheets to immediately record school leaders' discussions and insightful responses to the session questions.

LEI form. This form is used for all training courses conducted at the SCE-AUC. The university evaluator sent a link to the leaders to be filled in 20 minutes after the last session. The researcher received a confirmation from the evaluator that all participants responded.

Focus group interview. Two focus group interviews were conducted with the intervention's participants. The first group had four school leaders who work in the same school. The second focus group interview had five participants from four different schools. These interviews were scheduled for 40 minutes each at the end of the sixth session of the intervention; however, the first one lasted for 35 minutes, and the second was 80 minutes long. The discussion was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The transcriptions were shared with the group of participants for member checking.

Reflective logs. The reflection logs were completed by the leaders after the first, third, and fifth training sessions. The participants were asked to take ten minutes to reflect on the writing prompt related to the topic discussed in the same session. They were asked to write down their responses via a google link shared by the researcher at the end of each session.

Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership. Before the first and sixth sessions, the school leaders were asked to take 20 minutes to complete the online pretest-posttest knowledge test. The researcher sent the link for the google form via email to all participants.

ALQ. After the first session, the researcher sent a link for the ALQ self-assessment via a google form. The participants took 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, the current study used a convergent parallel design, which is aligned with the postpositivist (surveys, self-assessment, and questionnaires) and constructivist worldviews (focus group and reflective logs) for the evaluation conclusions (Christ, 2009). The

quantitative and the qualitative data were collected and analyzed separately. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine quantitative data, while the researcher utilized a conventional content analysis approach to analyze qualitative data. This section describes the statistical tests used for the quantitative data and the coding method used for qualitative data, which are also described in the Research Matrix (see Appendix M).

Quantitative analysis. The data from the ALQ data were entered into SPSS and cleaned to identify any missing or logically inconsistent data. I ran Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency among the set of questionnaire items. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistics were produced to examine differences between means and standard deviation for participants' responses. As for the LEI survey, responses were processed by SCE-AUC personnel using SPSS, and a report including the average score for each item was given. All comments from the participants were included in the data set.

A scoring rubric for the Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership was applied to the eight content open-ended questions (see Appendix R). The rubric assessed the participants' responses based on three different areas (e.g., content, reflection, and evidence from their context). The scoring was completed by the researcher and a second-rater; the second rater works at the AUC as an instructor with a background in the field of educational leadership. The second-rater was briefed about the course content and scoring procedures; both raters used the same rubric to score the tests. The scores of the two raters were averaged before they were entered into SPSS. Furthermore, inter-rater reliability was calculated using Pearson for the total score. I measured the raters' agreement using this crosstabulation method/correlation coefficient. Once adequate inter-rater reliability was confirmed, the scores for each item as well as the total scores were entered into SPSS. Paired sample t-tests were performed to examine differences between

participants' mean school leaders' inclusive knowledge scores from pre- to post-intervention. I also used the rubric to score the three reflective logs. I used the above-mentioned steps regarding using a second rater and calculating the interrater reliability between the first and second raters.

Participant's level of knowledge and understanding was classified as high or low by examining the range of their scores across the knowledge test and the reflective logs. School leaders who received a score of seven out of nine (top one-third) and above were considered high and the ones who received three out of nine (bottom one-third) were considered in the low range.

Qualitative data coding. The researcher used a conventional content analysis approach to analyze the data from each of the three qualitative data instruments—fieldnotes, focus group interview responses, and reflective logs. In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher read and re-read the notes taken, to become fully immersed in the data. An emergent coding was derived from the initial review of the three data sets.

The researcher moved from the text to code to connect the different codes into a category. First, the researcher highlighted and recorded words and phrases in the text that seem to capture the thoughts of the participants or patterns of their behavior. Second, these codes were developed and connected to determine categories and subcategories. Finally, category definitions, exact quotes, and excerpts were derived to report the findings. In the current exploratory research, the focus was on the frequency of behavior or statements to inductively inform grounded theory.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher's role must be explained to determine the findings' validity and to help to neutralize researcher bias (Unluer, 2012). The researcher is the instructor of the training and she has taught in the university setting for six years; moreover, she has conducted seminars entitled

Differentiated Instruction for Academic Diversity for teachers. The researcher has worked in the field of inclusive education for more than 15 years. During this time, she designed a school support system where students were identified to receive services (e.g., accommodations and modifications). Parents and teachers received training and students were well-served according to their individual educational plans. As an insider, it is important to record the researcher's responses and reactions to limit potential bias and ensure the analysis of data (Krieger, 1985). The researcher's journal is an essential component to connect the researcher's insights and reactions with the data collected.

Summary of Strengths and Limitations of the Design The outcome evaluation design attempts to generate valid inferences about the effect of the inclusive leadership intervention in terms of knowledge and skills of the participating educational leaders about inclusive education. To test the effectiveness of the intervention, the researcher attempts to obtain a level of internal validity (the relationship between the intervention's input and its effect) and external validity (generalization) (Wholey, Hatry & Newcomer, 2010). The outcome evaluation design moves from using a mixed-methods research approach to concurrently collecting and analyzing data to drawing inferences about the improvements needed to build inclusive knowledge and foster an inclusive professional learning community for academic diversity (Balfanz, 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Spillane, 2005). Inference validity is ensured by reducing confounding variables and using controls to support inclusive leadership intervention (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). One way is to ensure that the assumed results of the intervention are due to adequate exposure to the training offered. This approach requires to exclude any participants with special/gifted education certification to minimize possible effects of their prior knowledge on the indicators' improvement. No participants with a special or gifted

education license or background were accepted for the training, since it would not be possible to determine whether or not this intervention was the source of their knowledge. Furthermore, combining the qualitative and quantitative approaches offers a comprehensive and valid understanding of the improvement in the school leaders' knowledge and skills that would enable them to lead inclusive school support system for students with learning needs in the regular schools in Egypt (Sandelowski, 2000). Also, quantitative treatments of qualitative data can also be used to extract more information and to confirm researchers' assumptions. Additionally, observation during self-reporting is another way of 'qualitizing' quantitative data for a more transformative approach (Mertens, 2018; Sandelowski, 2000). Integrating the 'qualitizing' quantitative data and 'quantitizing' qualitative data and combining them at the interpretive level of research is an essential component in mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

When comparing the current evaluation design with other approaches used in research in this field, it is revealed that the dominant research and evaluation designs of principal training and preparation programs are mainly qualitative (Perrone & Tucker, 2019; Shaked & Schechter, 2017; Smith & Somer, 2016). Qualitative evaluation design captures the principals' perceptions and their life experiences. Although qualitative methods may be used in both formative and summative evaluations, they tend to be more heavily reliant upon formative evaluations. Summative evaluations are those aimed at determining the effectiveness of a program, thus they often use qualitative methods to add information on the context and quantitative data to measure outcomes (Patton, 2002).

The mixed-method research design may represent a challenge, especially to novice researchers, due to the possibility of having conflicting data or facing difficulty during data

collection (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). As a single researcher, I faced significant challenges due to workload and the accepted level of accuracy and precision. Being a novice in the research is another challenge; I attempted to learn about multiple methods and approaches and understand how to mix them appropriately (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

However, the outcome evaluation design can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach. A researcher can use the strengths of one method to overcome the weaknesses in another method by using mixed methods research. Due to the paucity of academic research in Egypt, this design generates and tests a grounded theory and increases the generalizability of the results (Crabtree & Williams, 2013).

Chapter 5

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore school leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions about the support needed for students with diverse learning needs. The findings of the dissertation were associated with the school leaders' participation in a university-led intensive inclusive leadership training. In Chapter 4, I presented the research study design, research questions, and inclusive leadership training components. The goal of this chapter is to present the findings for each of the following research questions.

Inclusive Leadership Training

To answer RQ1, I thematically coded the fieldnotes for each session and used the results from the LEI survey data. Both sets of data helped in assessing the implementation plan of inclusive leadership and its fidelity to answer RQ1. For RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4, I thematically coded the focus group and reflective log data and examined the quantitative data from the knowledge pretest and posttest, the ALQ data, and reflective log scores using SPSS to triangulate areas of alignment as well as discrepant findings, to support assertions related to the study questions.

The first research question focused on describing the inclusive leadership training components and the process of implementation, including adherence, dose, and participants' responsiveness. The coming section describes the implementation plan and process of delivery of training to nine Egyptian school leaders (two principals, four academic coordinators, one administrative director, and two teachers with leadership positions), giving a full account of the training process, duration, and participants' level of engagement during the six sessions.

Implementation Process

The intervention took place over three weeks, from the 10th through the 31st of October 2020. I used the online modality of instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic and university closure for in-person instruction (AUC, 2020). The instruction time was divided between the asynchronous segment (four hours) and the synchronous segment (two hours) for each session (see Appendix V). Here, I report on the adherence, dose, and participants' responsiveness to the implementation plan.

Adherence. Before the first session, all participants answered the pretest as planned. The design of the first five synchronous sessions followed the same pattern. I started with an icebreaker or a warm-up activity, made a connection between the different topics and learning objectives of the sessions, summarized the topic in hand, and answered the participants' questions about the topic. Participants attended all sessions, and they were engaged in group activities, whole group discussions, and online games. In the sixth session, the participants presented their understanding of their role as an agent of change in their school. Following these presentations, I divided the participants into two groups, and I conducted two focus group interviews.

At the end of the second, third, and fourth synchronous sessions, I introduced an administrative dilemma. The administrative dilemma is considered as the practicum component of the training where the school leaders and administrators collaborate and use one of CFG Protocols, their analytical skills, and problem-solving techniques in case studies. I designed three different administrative dilemmas corresponding to the topic of the session (school system, gifted education program, and PLC). The participants were able to frame and analyze the dilemmas using Consultancy Protocol discussed earlier in the session. Also, the group

discussions helped them to be more self-reflective and critical of their school problems, as one participant reported in the class discussion (fieldnotes) "I enjoyed the dilemma discussion and analysis; I was able to see the problem from different perspectives."

Dose. The timing of the training was challenging. Fall 2020 included the introduction of new hybrid systems at the international school in Egypt. However, all participants were able to attend and participate in all online sessions, completing both the asynchronous and synchronous sessions on time. They were also able to fulfill all requirements as they promptly answered both pretest and posttest within the timeframe planned for this activity with no further reminders. Participants indicated no problem with their internet access or website login where I uploaded all training materials.

During class discussions, their recommendations involved more time for online instruction and for the training in general. One participant reported, "I would recommend more instructional hours and more activities. I would extend the duration of instruction to two months instead of one as the information is too technical and interesting at the same time." Another participant said "the course was amazing, interesting, challenging, and full of powerful knowledge. We need to learn more."

Participant responsiveness. During the first session, the participants were present online on time and ready with their notes and questions. In the LEI survey, most participants reported no internet accessibility problems, and 75% reported that they would be interested to take more online courses. However, two participants expressed their concerns about attending online classes in the future, "I prefer in-person interaction, especially in education. Facial expressions and body language are integral parts of my learning experiences, which are not 100% when sitting behind a screen." Another participant explained that "online platforms do not give me

enough motivation and lack the enthusiasm generated from an in-person class setting. Taking class while I'm relaxed at home around my children is distracting and unappealing." To enhance participants' responsiveness and engagement, I scheduled individual meetings to increase my knowledge about their individual needs and to build the social presence online. The aim was to model the role of the authentic transformational leader to increase the participants' motivation and build their capacity as well. Some participants were receptive, and our discussions were intended to support their personal needs and professional goals.

The class discussions revealed a tension among the participants identifying the type of academic diversity that they can serve and support in their schools. Two participants showed a clear interest in gifted education only, pointing out that their advanced school curriculum would not support any students with learning difficulties. They decided to create a policy to serve students with advanced abilities in their schools, ignoring the needs of students with learning difficulties. This standpoint raised a conflict among the participants in the same group. One participant argued this decision based on her human right-based views; she believed that educators should serve all students with diverse learning needs regardless of the school's vision and readiness. To manage the tension during the discussion, I asked all participants to share their schools' vision and mission and to examine them in terms of academic diversity. The participants came from five different schools in New Cairo. Four schools out of five had no sign of academic diversity or inclusion in their vision and mission statements. Only one school's vision included words such as "diversity", "all", and "differentiation" in its vision. Despite this fact, two schools paid for their leaders to attend the training about inclusive leadership. Furthermore, during class discussion, two participants explained, "we do not have a vision for students with diverse learning needs in the first place", and "no clear procedures nor policies

were shared with teachers; no serious effort is exerted to support students with learning difficulties and no effort at all is dedicated to gifted students." Participants explained that their students had unserved needs.

All the participants expressed their high level of engagement during the administrative dilemmas' discussions. As previously mentioned, in the second session, I introduced the CFG's Consultancy Protocol. The participants were interested to learn more about this reflective tool, which examines administrative dilemmas in schools. The first dilemma introduced a problem faced by a special education coordinator in a regular school. The special education coordinator worked with a group of students with diverse learning needs who receive accommodations to support their grade level curriculum. The frustrated special education coordinator quitted her job as she was not part of the decision process for student placement or promotion. During the online class, the participants framed the administrative dilemma by saying that "the school principal has an autocratic leadership style with no chance of delegation and shared leadership. The school has no vision for students with diverse learning needs. The support system and communication are fragile." Also, they identified the gaps in the school system "there are gaps in communication, suspension procedures, and policy for academic diversity." Despite being prompted, they were unable to ask in-depth questions nor to give their recommendations for this dilemma.

In the following sessions, the participants' level of understanding and engagement increased when analyzing the second and third administrative dilemmas. The second dilemma introduced the frustration of a newly hired gifted education teacher who taught 15 identified gifted students in a resource room. On her first day, the teacher was overwhelmed with her students' diversity and she had no individual plan for each gifted student to support his/her learning. The participants were able to recognize the teacher's lack of experience and

preparation. During the administrative dilemma class discussion, participants were insightful, and they asked questions about the school's system for support, communication with administration, and teacher's qualifications, "is there a system/policy and procedures/ process for gifted education at her school? Had she shared her well-thought plan with her leader and interdisciplinary team?" The participants recommended gifted education training for teachers and leaders, development of school policies and procedures for gifted education review, and administration support.

During the third dilemma's discussion, the participants were more confident when analyzing the administrative dilemma, as they provided insightful questions about the principles for establishing a PLC in a school. They captured the lack of common vision and common language between the school principal and her teachers in the dilemma. The participants also were able to apply the principles of effective PLC (e.g., creating a guiding coalition, choosing the right forum, building the shared knowledge, and arriving at a consensus on the consensuses (DuFour et al., 2016) into the system gap analysis and recommendations sections.

The school leaders appeared to be positive in their response to the intervention. As previously mentioned, the timing of the training was challenging for all schools in Egypt. Nevertheless, despite the challenges facing them, including the need to develop a new system in their school, they were enrolled in the training and expressed their genuine intention to make a difference and turn their school around. Immediately after the first session, six participants asked for one-to-one meetings to discuss administrative dilemmas in their school (i.e., teachers' qualifications and readiness for academic diversity, owner's perspective, accommodations, and modification, and testing and grading system). To support the participants' needs, meetings were

scheduled to discuss their questions in detail and to update the website with more appropriate materials to support the participants' learning progress.

Class discussions were highly informative and reflective. Two participants shared their own experience as mothers of children with diverse learning needs. One expressed her concern about the time given to her son to finish his assignments, "I feel that giving students more time to finish assignments is not enough. I find no Egyptian teacher nor specialist who helped my son, we cannot find an Egyptian qualified specialist to give remedies." Another participant explained that her gifted child faced major behavior problems every year and he was on probation to leave the school because of his behavior with teachers,

> The qualification for teachers and administrators who support gifted education in Egypt does not exist. People can help students with learning difficulties but gifted and enrichment classes do not exist. In my 16 years of teaching, I have not seen one program for the gifted students.

Another participant narrated her experience as a child with learning difficulty and high potential. The participant went to the United States of America when she was a child for five years. She related to the MTSS as she was identified as a gifted student with English language acquisition needs. She used to attend advanced mathematics classes with a group of students and another support class to learn English as a first language, "till now, I was unaware of the kind of help I received when I was learning abroad, but now I understand. I wish we can apply the MTSS in Egypt. It [MTSS] would help many students in my classes". These discussions revealed the apparent high level of engagement of different participants reflecting on several challenges facing educators and school leaders catering to students with diverse learning needs in Egypt. The coming section presents the results of the learner surveys, which evaluate the effectiveness of coursework delivery and quality of instruction.

Post intervention evaluation: LEI. The Evaluation, Testing, and Assessment Department at SCE-AUC sent the LEI survey results to the GSE office after they had tabulated them. The GSE office shared the average scores (without the standard deviation) with me, as the course instructor. The survey results show that participants reported an overall average of (*M* = 5.28) on a 6-point scale (see Table 5.1), meaning that they were positively satisfied with the learning experience, as they responded with “agree” to 16 statements. Also, they responded with "strongly agree" to two statements and with "slightly agree" to another three statements. Their overall response to the questions about the Learning Environment was (*M* = 5.44). Although, all participants strongly agreed that they were treated with respect (*M* = 6.0), fewer reported that course tasks and activities stimulated their critical thinking (*M* = 5.17). The Learning Outcome category indicated that participants found the course tasks and activities relevant to the learning environment (*M* = 5.50). As for Instructional Delivery, the instructor's organization and preparedness were positively perceived (*M* = 5.58); all participants confirmed that sessions always started on time (*M* = 6.00). However, participants reported that they need more opportunities to interact with their colleagues during online learning (*M* = 4.42). Regarding attending the course online, the participants reported that the online materials and activities were easy to access (*M* = 5.33), although they believed that the orientation on the technologies used in the course needed to be more helpful (*M* = 4.92).

Table 5.1

Learner Evaluation of Instruction (LEI)-Fall 2020 Results

Item	Mean
Learning Environment:	5.44
1. I experienced an interactive learning.	5.33
2. The course tasks / activities stimulate my critical thinking	5.17

3. I feel I am treated with respect	6.00
4. I enjoy the learning environment	5.25
Learning Outcomes:	5.38
5. I find the course tasks / activities relevant to the learning environment.	5.50
6. I will be able to use the learning outcomes as stated in the course outline / syllabus.	5.25
Instructional Delivery:	5.29
7. I frequently interact with my instructor during learning.	5.17
8. English is primarily used as the language of instruction in my class.	5.33
9. I frequently interact with my colleagues during learning.	4.42
10. The instructor is well organized/prepared.	5.58
11. The instructor always starts face to face class sessions on time.	6.00
12. There are varied tasks/activities that help me master the course content.	4.92
13. The instructor gives a full class session.	5.50
14. The feedback I receive is meaningful and guides my learning.	5.27
15. I learn things I can use in my life.	5.33
16. My performance is assessed fairly in class.	5.36
Course Online Component:	5.12
17. Orientation on the technologies used in the course is helpful.	4.92
18. Online materials and activities are easy to access.	5.33
19. Online components are well integrated in the course.	5.00
20. Online activities and materials are helpful to my learning	5.17
21. Technology support is adequate.	5.17
Overall	5.28

Note. n = 9. Information in this table was provided by the School of Continuing Education, American University in Cairo, which hosted this training program. Rating scale used: 6= strongly agree, 5 = agree, 4 = slightly agree, 3 = slightly disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 strongly disagree. The Overall is the combined average score of Learning Environment, Learning Outcome, Instructional Delivery and Course Online Component. Scores less than 4 points need attention.

In sum, the university-led intervention implementation plan was executed with high fidelity. No changes occurred in the actual plan. All participants attended the sessions and were engaged in all related activities and tasks especially in the administrative dilemma analysis activity. As previously mentioned, class discussion revealed the participants' different dispositions concerning inclusive practices as they disagreed on the type of students, they should cater for in their school programs. However, their overall positive responses on the evaluation survey indicated that there was a significant agreement on the effectiveness of the training content and instructional delivery.

Participant Experience in the Intervention

To explore participants' experiences within the online inclusive leadership intervention, I analyzed the results of the participants' focus group interview and their reflective log responses. To answer RQ2, focus group and reflective log responses were analyzed using thematic coding that employed a priori coding with the potential for emergent codes. Emergent codes played a more important role in sorting participant accounts with the following categories and subcategories aligning with research questions: inclusive environment in Egyptian schools and staff qualifications. Furthermore, the focus group interview analysis revealed an emergent subtheme that underlined the participants' misunderstanding of different concepts, such as authentic leadership, referral forms, and professional learning communities.

The focus group interview results highlighted a lack of policy implementation, administrative support, and staff qualifications for those participants who explicitly noted this

theme. This exploratory study's findings underlined the major barriers facing academic diversity in Egypt as mentioned in the research literature (OECD, 2015; Parnell, 2017) and the needs assessment study's findings. As previously mentioned, the educational policy in Egypt is top-down, with no support from stakeholders (Barakat, 2019); administrative preparation programs are absent (OECD, 2015); and teachers are not well-prepared to support all students in their classrooms (Parnell, 2017). The following section explored the context of learning in five international schools in Egypt focusing on the inclusive learning environment in Egypt and the staff qualifications. A subtheme emerged that is significant for further exploration as it highlighted different misconceptions in terms of the identification process and referral forms, and professional learning communities in Egyptian schools.

An inclusive learning environment. In the first session, participants reported the barriers facing administrative support for academic diversity in their schools. This finding aligned with the administrative support foundation, contained in the Schoolhouse Model, which is needed for an inclusive learning environment (Villa & Thousands, 2016). First, as previously mentioned, only one school out of five has a vision for academic diversity. However, none has reported the existence of a school-level policy to support academic diversity. During the focus group interview, participants expressed their disappointment about the absence of a support system in their schools, as one participant explained,

> I was really upset that the MTSS is not done in the Egyptian school properly. This system requires multiple rooms in the school, specialized subject teachers to accommodate the needs and to modify materials. Also, we need experienced administrative staff to follow up with the records, schedules, and procedures.

Another participant explained the barriers found in their school curriculum, which is designed with no differentiated instruction opportunities for all students: "The problem is having a curriculum with no support. By the end of the school year, parents and school only care about

the report cards to measure students' performance." During the focus group interview, another participant described the fragility of his school's support system,

> We need files for our students to know the progress across the years. Sometimes, I find students with very low skills at higher levels; this will not happen if I have a system and documentation in my school. We do not have a good pull-out system. Sometimes, we [classroom teachers] pulled out from subjects that are not important from their [administration] point of view like the second language, and social studies to give extra time for English, math, and science instruction. No IEP for any students. No enrichment for gifted students at all. They [administration] depends on the teacher if he or she can sit during free time to reteach a lesson or help a student. It does not apply to all teachers. It [supporting academic diversity] is not in the system and school owner's vision.

Second, none of the five schools have an identification process and procedures for academic diversity. All participants reported the absence of school-level policy, process, and procedures to help students with diverse learning needs in their schools. Even the participant with a school vision that appeared supported academic diversity reported, "no identification process takes place in my school. Only if the child has learning difficulties, we ask the parents to get a report from the center outside.*"* She highlighted the fragmented support system in her school,

> the school asked us [classroom teacher] to make diagnostic tests; this is the identification test. I do not like it. Then, the support teachers take the students during the classroom teachers' sessions. This support class happened twice a week to give them [students with diverse learning needs] extra help.

She continued to describe the service given to gifted students in her school, "nothing is planned, I have gifted students I do not do anything but to give them more work to be busy". Another participant explained the absence of clear procedures that were shared with all stakeholders to support students with diverse learning needs in his school. He further explained that when a child is referred to support class the school usually asks the parent to test the student outside. The parent brings a psycho-educational report, measuring the cognitive and academic

abilities of the child, and gives it to the teacher. “No training. No explanation. Only pull-out from unnecessary subjects [second language and social studies].”

The participants’ misconception about the procedures emerged when they discussed the identification process needed to support academic diversity in Egyptian schools. In the second session, I explained the MTSS and RTI systems, identification process, and the referral form procedures. During the class discussion, three participants confirmed that they have referral forms to identify students in their schools. When I asked them to further explain the process and procedures of referring students to the school administration, their misconception of this practice appeared. One participant explained that "once a year, during the parent-teacher conference, some teachers submit a plan to explain the students' performance level and set some goals for improvement". I explained that the performance monitoring plan, as described by the participant, is a way to report the student’s performance over the grading period and it is different than the referral form. The leaders who work with her were unaware of this goal-based plan and they concluded that not all teachers used it, but it was used once by some teachers. Another participant shared a sheet he had designed to track his students' behavioral and academic performance in his math class throughout the year. The participant further noted, in the focus group interview, that he sometimes supports students,

> According to students’ marks, we follow up with weak students using activities like a science fair. We also can discover the weaknesses and strengths of students in science and math. No process and no plan, no vision of the school, each teacher is trying to collect the students' history. We need a profile for each student to know that students' marks and teachers' comments.

Finally, participants reported the absence of collaboration between administration and teachers. All participants clearly expressed that their school administration lacks systematic processes and procedures to collaborate with teachers about academic diversity goals.

Furthermore, during the focus group interview, the participant who has a support program in her school emphasized the lack of collaboration between the classroom teacher and the support teacher,

> I visited them once and I was not happy with their teaching and activities are given to the students. For example, they put a goal to read the CVC, as a homeroom teacher I teach CVC words in class and they teach the sound/letter correspondences in their session. No collaboration between the support unit teachers and the homeroom teacher. I only see them once at the beginning of the school year and then nothing happens. I do not meet regularly with them nor I put the goal with them and during the reporting system, I do not work with them also.

The research explained the effect of collaboration and transformational leadership practices on the high-quality support systems at the school level (Ainscow & Sandill 2010; Lambrecht et, al., 2020; Marston et al., 2003). The purposeful meetings designed by the school leaders provide collaborative opportunities among teachers. This structure is needed to achieve a high-quality plan for individual students (Lambrecht et, al., 2020).

Staff qualifications. In the first session, all the participants stated their opinions about staff qualifications. For them, one of the major challenges facing academic diversity in their schools is the lack of staff qualifications and preparation to support students with diverse learning needs. Their common concern is confirmed by the literature, which indicates that almost 30% of Egyptian teachers lack proper professional teaching qualifications and there are serious issues with quality in-service training (Badran, & Toprak, 2020; MOE, 2014). The participants expressed their concerns about the qualifications of school owners, leaders, and teachers.

First, as they all work in private schools, the school owner's mindset is strategic for planning and implementing evidence-based programs for students with diverse learning needs. The school owners determine the type of students enrolled in their school. During the focus group interview, one participant said, "after I finished the course, my first step is to set an

appointment with my school owner. He must change his mind and vision and help students with diverse learning needs." She further explained one way to convince the owner to establish a system for academic diversity: "the school owners will understand that gap if they see the return on investment. I plan to collect data about students' performance to show the gap and the possibility of having an investment". This quotation marked the participant's learning curve and development over the training. On the first day of the training, the same participant expressed a strong human right-based view, explaining that it is the students' right to have a support system in their schools regardless of the school vision or the owner's strategic plan. She explained that the school must have a support system regardless of the owner's vision. By the end of the training, she stated, "now, I see it from a different perspective. When I start the training, I thought it is easy to implement a program. I apologize to say that parents will have to pay to get the service". She added that "offering good services and hiring qualified teachers need money. I will convince the owner to implement an affordable support unit based on the Schoolhouse Model".

Second, all the participants agreed that school principals are the implementer of the school vision and policies; also, they are responsible for building the teachers' capacity. Without a strong set of inclusive qualifications, it is difficult to design and implement a program for academic diversity. One participant expressed their need to have an authentic transformational leader who can lead a team of teachers towards a differentiated instructional model, "we have not been using differentiation and RTI and co-teaching models. To implement a successful differentiation program, we need a transformational, authentic leader who can inspire their team create a shared vision and guide the change they aim for." Furthermore, participants stated that authentic school leaders support all students in their school: "An authentic leader must have an

action plan to support all students in school. He or she must identify students via diagnostic tests and provide the support accordingly." According to one participant, an authentic leader "needs to allocate the passionate dedicated teachers who create professional learning communities to support each other. Through delegation and incentives, we would keep them motivated to move forward." The positive expectations of the participants regarding school leaders' qualifications and development to support academic diversity contrasts with literature findings that indicated that most Egyptian school leaders are not qualified to manage their instructional role as leaders of teaching and learning in their schools (Badran, & Toprak, 2020, OECD, 2015).

Finally, all participants had a strong opinion about classroom teachers and support teachers' qualifications in Egypt. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of knowledge and skills of teachers to support academic diversity. Also, the support teachers' qualifications were questioned, "support teachers are not qualified or certified to teach students with learning disabilities like dyslexia." One participant claimed that "teachers may not be qualified enough to give reliable observation data. We must be trained by experts to identify students in our schools. Most teachers are not graduates from schools of education with no further education". Furthermore, one participant thought that her schoolteacher training is problematic, "as teachers tend to attend courses and do not know how to apply their knowledge. After every training, I should meet teachers for action plans to applying their knowledge in the classroom."

Another area of misconception emerged when participants discussed their experiences of PLC. During the sessions, we discussed the PLC guidelines to build teachers' capacity for academic diversity. However, participants' focus group responses reflected a lack of understanding of the PLC principles and functionality. Their interview responses revealed

another level of misconception concerning the role and examples of PLC in their schools. For example, two participants described the PLC in their school as a group of people who revised the school mission and vision (a steering committee of school leaders) or the committee designed for the school accreditation process. Also, they described the teacher staff room as a PLC as "they [teachers] share their experience, professionally voice their concern, discuss topics and resort to each other for support and help." The school leaders confused the functionality of a community of practice and a professional learning community.

To conclude, participants expressed their disappointment about the absence of support systems in their schools, such as MTSS, RTI, and the Schoolhouse Model. Knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to inclusion are needed for all stakeholders to support academic diversity on the school level (i.e., school owner, school leaders, teachers, and support teachers). Collaboration among educators and leaders is necessary for translating policy into practices. Participants emphasized the importance of on-going collaborative meetings to support inclusive practices and students with diverse learning needs achievement.

School Leaders' Inclusive Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

This section examines the changes in the participants' knowledge, skills, and dispositions towards supporting students with diverse learning needs in their schools following the conclusion of the training. To answer RQ3, the participants' responses on the Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test were analyzed descriptively and the pretest and posttest scores were compared using a t-test. Before I started the analysis, an AUC colleague and I scored the pretest and posttest separately according to the test rubric (see Appendix R). I estimated the interrater reliability to determine the level of agreement between the two raters' scores. The correlation of the two raters' scores was adequate for the purposes of this research, with a Pearson of $r = .80$.

Preintervention and postintervention test results were then compared for changes across the intervention. Table 5.2 provides the means and SDs on the pretest and posttest. Also, the reflective log responses and scores were analyzed using the emergent coding method and SPSS, respectively.

On the Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test leadership questions (question 1-4), participants reported a partial understanding of the general definition of leadership (M = 5.67, SD = 1.41); however, their knowledge slightly expanded by the end of the intervention adding more in-depth information about leadership (M = 6.78, SD = 1.10). Nevertheless, it seemed that the participants' knowledge varied about different leadership styles such as transformational leadership (M = 4.22, SD = .97), authentic leadership (M =3.56, SD = .88), and shared leadership (M = 3.00, SD = .00), as they tend to have limited information about the different leadership styles. However, after the intervention, the participants' knowledge almost doubled when they were asked about their understanding of transformational leadership (M = 7.11, SD = .33), authentic leadership (M = 6.67, SD = 1.00), and shared leadership (M = 6.22, SD= 1.56). For example, on the pretest, one participant defined shared leadership as being encouraging and transparent. Her response on the posttest reflected in-depth knowledge, “shared leadership is the sharing of power and influence, with one person remaining in charge. It leads to a better organizational performance by being transparent, encouraging autonomy and being open to others' ideas.”

To investigate differences between the participants’ preintervention and postintervention leadership knowledge, I performed paired sample t-tests. The results revealed a significant difference in certain areas of knowledge. Their overall responses on the pretest indicated limited knowledge about inclusive leadership practices (M = 59.11, SD = 3.33). However, the

participants' positive responses on the posttest suggested that they gained a significant level of inclusive knowledge (M = 103.44, SD = 12.89; t = -10.98, p = 0.000). The difference between participants' responses on the pretest and posttest answering the question about their general understanding of leadership was small (t = 2.20, p = .062) suggesting their familiarity with the topic; the participants had an adequate understanding of the definition of leadership before the intervention. Nevertheless, their responses on the other topics related to inclusion and academic diversity reflected a significant difference between overall scores of pretest and posttest responses (t = -10.98, p = 0.000).

Table 5.2

Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test: Mean, St. Deviation for Questions 1-8, Pre- and Post-Training.

No.	Question Content	Timing	Mean	St. Deviation
Q 1	Define the term Leadership in your own words.	Pre	5.67	1.41
		Post	6.78	1.10
Q 2	Describe the types and traits of transformational leadership.	Pre	4.22	.97
		Post	7.11	.33
Q 3	Describe the types and traits of authentic leadership.	Pre	3.56	.88
		Post	6.67	1.00
Q 4	Describe the types and traits of shared leadership.	Pre	3.00	.00
		Post	6.22	1.56
Q 5	What are the types of evidence-based support systems promoting inclusive education?	Pre	3.33	.71
		Post	6.56	1.24
Q 6	What are the elements and procedures necessary to implement successful programs for students with learning difficulties and gifted students in your school?	Pre	3.67	1.00
		Post	6.56	1.59
Q 7	How do you use the cycle of improvement in your school to evaluate the effectiveness of the specialized program for academic diversity?	Pre	3.22	.67
		Post	6.44	1.51
Q 8		Pre	3.22	.67

What do you know about a) teacher teaming and b) Critical Friendship Groups?	Post	5.56	1.51
Overall Scores	Pre	59.11	3.33
	Post	103.44	12.89

Note. n = 9.

Two questions (5 and 6) on the Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test were dedicated to measuring the participants' knowledge about the procedures needed to implement systems and programs within international schools. A comparison of the participants' pretest (M = 3.33, SD = .71) and posttest (M = 6.56, SD = 1.24) responses reflected improvement in their level of knowledge about the inclusive system. Also, their understanding of programs tailored for academic diversity improved as indicated in their pretest mean ratings (M = 3.67, SD = 1.00) and their posttest mean ratings (M = 6.56, SD = 1.59). For example, on the pretest, a participant indicated that she has no previous knowledge regarding principles governing the effectiveness of programs for academic diversity. Yet on the posttest, the same participant explained the elements needed to design an effective program as follows.

> We start with screening and observations; this is followed by interdisciplinary meetings and students' case analysis and professionals' recommendations. After we set written well-planned individual plans, we must monitor students' achievement using an on-going improvement cycle to reevaluating action plans. Meanwhile, all stakeholders, staff, leaders, and parents, must have continuous training.

Supporting this point, the participants scored relatively high (M = 7.50, SD = 1.87) on the second reflective log question targeting the design of programs for academic diversity compared to their responses on the first (M = 6.27, SD = 1.14) and third (M = 6.05, SD = 1.58) reflective log questions. This finding suggests that they grasped more knowledge about the programs needed to support students with diverse learning needs compared to the other topics and concepts.

The last two questions (questions 7 and 8) on the Inclusive Leadership Knowledge Test focused on action planning and collaboration among educators. The scores on these questions also showed very limited pretest knowledge among the participants (M = 3.22, SD = 0.67), while on the posttest, participants scored relatively high, indicating their gain of knowledge responding to the cycle of improvement question (M = 6.44, SD = 1.51) and the PLC question (M = 5.56, SD = 1.51). For example, a participant indicated that he had no prior knowledge concerning action planning and employing a cycle of improvement within his schoolwork as an academic coordinator. However, his response on the posttest indicated that he was able to understand the process of the cycle of improvement,

> we learn about the steps of the improvement cycle (plan, do, check, and act). We would have to identify the problem first, then carry out a continuous data checking system to monitor the ongoing changes. Finally, if the data seems to be successful, then it should be implemented at a larger scale.

When the participants were asked about their understanding and application of action. planning and PLC, their reflective log scores were low (M = 6.05, SD = 1.58). To sum up, these findings suggest that the intervention was successful in targeting and improving participants' inclusive knowledge, which focused on styles of leaders and types of systems and programs needed to support inclusive education for academic diversity in the Egyptian international schools. However, it was less successful in improving their knowledge in the areas of building professional learning communities and action planning for academic diversity.

Participants' role as change agents. During the focus group interview, all participants discussed the change they might lead based on the knowledge and skills they gained from the training. Three different roles emerged from their discussions: the inclusive principal, the inclusive academic coordinator, and the advocate. First, as an inclusive administrator or principal who supports academic diversity in their school, one participant emphasized her responsibility to

plan the whole process, "staffing, scheduling, observation, meeting parents of struggling students for referrals and following up with the head of departments on implementing the school program are a must. I will help teachers to design an RTI program for all students." During the focus group interview, another administrator aspired to design gifted and talented enhancements for the high school curriculum supporting college admission and students' scholarship, "I would like to expand my math program to involve gifted students in other fields like science or languages. We can apply acceleration or curriculum compacting and maybe pulling out the gifted students." Another administrator explained, "in the Schoolhouse Model, I see myself responsible for implementing the school vision to specify the required competencies, put the action plan, and identify the resources needed."

Four participants discussed their aspiration to design programs to accommodate students with diverse learning needs in their schools. One coordinator had a well-planned response to lead the change in her school. She decided to create a differentiated learning committee made of different members (e.g., principal, administrators, heads of departments, and teachers). She explained,

> As a math coordinator for academic diversity, my focus includes students with learning difficulties, and gifted students as well. We are transformational and authentic leaders sharing a common vision which is supporting the well-being of all students and offering them equal learning opportunities and differentiated instruction that support their different learning abilities and styles.

Another participant described the process by which she could identify her students for academic support, "I will start by an entry level exam to determine the level of every student (Basic, General, or Accelerated). Students will be assigned to classroom teachers to accommodate their needs."

Two participants were interested in the role of parents and student advocates. One participant explained, “as a leader for change, I would start with a vision to help everyone then I would have a plan for each student that is supported by all stakeholders”. Another participant focused on convincing the school owner to establish a unit for support, “I will convince the owner to design an affordable model; then I will be the leader of the support unit applying the Schoolhouse Model and all the topics we discussed in the training.”

In conclusion, the participants’ overall scores on the postintervention test marked the knowledge they had gained about inclusive education and practices. The final class discussion indicated their understanding of their role as agent of change in their schools. Also, discussion revealed the changes in some participants’ attitude towards implementation of the support system in international schools. Participants reported that they need to seek further understanding to practice and apply evidence-based system of support in their schools for all students’ achievement.

The School Leaders' Perception of Authentic Leadership

To answer RQ4, I estimated the reliability for the16 items of the ALQ using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency before analyzing the school leaders' perception of authentic leadership. The acceptable lower end for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 (Cortina, 1993). The ALQ scale had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.86$), noting the strong alignment of items and internal consistency.

On a five-point Likert scale, the participants scored high (4 and above) on the Internalized Moral Perspective subtest's items, "My morals guide what I do as a leader" (M = 4.78, SD = .44), and "My actions reflect my core values" (M = 4.56, SD = .53). Also, they scored high on the Self-Awareness subtest items, "I accept the feelings I have about myself" (M = 4.33,

SD = 1.00), and "I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I am as a person" (*M* = 4.11, *SD* = 1.05). However, their responses were relatively low on the two subtests' items (e.g., the Balanced Processing and Transparency). The participants' responses reflected less confidence when disclosing and sharing information to obtain collective decisions. Examples of items were, "I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me" (*M* = 3.67, *SD* = 1.00); "I rarely present a false front to others" (*M* = 3.44, *SD* = 1.33); "I openly share my feelings with others" (*M* = 3.33, *SD* = 1.41); and "seek other opinions before making up my mind" (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = 1.20).

The subtest total scores for Internalized Moral Perspective were relatively high (*M* = 16.67, *SD* = 2.24); however, Balanced Processing scores reflected a relatively low range (*M* = 14.67, *SD* = 3.46) (see Table 5.3). The ALQ scoring manual interpreted high authentic leadership scores that ranged between 16–20 and low authentic leadership scores that reflected 15 and below. Scores in the upper range indicate stronger authentic leadership, whereas scores in the lower range indicate weaker authentic leadership (Northouse, 2018).

Table 5.3

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire: Subtest and Total Test Means and Standard Deviations

Subtest	*M*	*SD*	N of Items
Internalized Moral Perspective	16.67	2.24	4
Self-awareness	16.00	1.80	4
Relational Transparency	15.00	3.28	4
Balanced Processing	14.67	3.46	4
Authentic Leadership Total	62.33	9.47	16

Note. n = 9.

During the first session, participants argued about the style of authentic leaders and their traits. I shared with them my understanding of authentic leadership, as explained in Chapter Three: authentic leaders focus on the concept of self and have positive psychological capacities

and organizational skills to foster positive self-development of their followers (Luthans & Avolio, 2009; Tonkin, 2013). The definition of authentic leadership was thoroughly discussed with the school leaders during the first session, and they agreed on the significance of adopting the traits and skills of this type. This type of leader supports the inclusive system and builds teachers' capacity for academic diversity in their school. Furthermore, one participant confirmed that authentic leaders in an Egyptian school must "see these children with your hearts because knowing them you will know that they are worth all your efforts". However, despite the participants' overall high ratings ($M = 62.33$) on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Northouse, 2018), they reported their concerns with implementing these leadership styles in Egyptian schools. Participants discussed the pitfalls of authentic leadership in general and in the Egyptian context, indicating that this level of transparency and authenticity may be seen as a sign of weaknesses in an Egyptian school. One participant commented that "teachers can see these discussions as a sign of weaknesses as if I cannot have an opinion about the topic." Their views were confirmed by different studies that criticized this trait-based leadership. Research has highlighted the weak empirical foundation; also, it pointed to the unrealistic and excessively positive organizational goals of the authentic leadership. Research also pointed out that being authentic could possibly lead to personal vulnerability (Alvessona, & Einolab, 2019).

Another issue was raised about the tension between job-based roles and the authentic self. The participants expressed their concerns about their school owners' understanding and efforts towards building school support systems in their schools. The school leaders reported that they may face tension with the school owner if they attempt to be transformational authentic leaders leading the change in their school and building a support system for academic diversity. One participant explained, "I will try to convince the owner to support the program. Our problems in

our schools are the owners and their mentality." During the classroom discussion, another participant stated that,

> we [teachers and leaders] are not free to hire or follow up with the special education coordinator. Those kids are out of the system and out of the administration and owner's scope, we have no vision to support them. No one cares about them. Like you mentioned in the first session, it is all about the vision if only the owner and top management team have the vision for academic diversity. Why do I pay one extra penny and I do not get one extra penny in return?

This argument was discussed in the authentic leadership literature (Goffee & Jones, 2005; Ibarra, 2015). The literature offers a solution to the previously mentioned tension by keeping a balance between the leader's beliefs and the demands of the job. Ibarra (2015) indicated that extreme authenticity can hinder leadership effectiveness as it can impede the leaders' transformation into a new role. In addition, the leaders' credibility can be lost if they continuously disclose their feelings and thoughts. Furthermore, authentic leaders with new roles may prefer their old selves with limited development. However, strong authentic leaders may reflect their inner self; they should know which personality traits they should reveal within a given context. They must be capable to adapt to the situation at hand, like a chameleon. Yet, they must confirm their identities in the process. Authentic leaders must focus on the organizational goals, and, at the same time, they must refer to their background and convictions (Goffee & Jones, 2005; Ibarra, 2015).

Lastly, authentic leadership as a concept is highly culturally and contextually sensitive terminology (Cervo et al., 2016; Walumbwa et al. 2008). According to Ford and Harding (2011), leaders adjust their authenticity in adapting to a collective context. The participants continued to discuss the possibility of implementing authentic leadership in their schools. According to them, sharing information to support data-driven decisions and being transparent with their colleagues are less favorable, as they scored relatively low on the two subscales, Balance Processing and

Transparency, compared to the other two subscale scores. This finding is aligned with the participative indicator of Egyptian managers as measured in the GLOBE study (House et al., 2002). This study indicated that the degree to which managers in Egypt involve others in making and implementing decisions is considered low with an average score ($M = 4.69$), compared to the international standards (Elsaid & Elsaid, 2012; House et al., 2002).

Discussion

This study focused on examining how learning contexts (e.g., school-level policies, leadership, and teachers) accommodate students with diverse learning needs in international schools in Egypt. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of inclusive leadership training to improve nine Egyptian school leaders' inclusive knowledge and practices, giving an account of their training experiences. The study's intervention involved the implementation of online inclusive leadership training related to different academic diversity issues in Egypt, specifically focusing on improving school leaders' inclusive knowledge and competencies to support education for all. A mixed-methods data research design was used to respond to the four research questions. This section discusses the findings from this study, including making connections with current literature related to learning contexts, drawing conclusions, discussing limitations of the study, and presenting recommendations for future research and practice.

The results of the study reflected the nine Egyptian school leaders' dissatisfaction with their school owner's vision for academic diversity. When asked to analyze their schools' vision for academic diversity, they did not seem confident about their school's vision for students with diverse learning needs, and they argued about the type of students their school administration allows them to serve. Even the school with a vision statement that included serving academic diversity had no clear statements of policy. The participant who worked in this school explained

that no policy was shared with all teachers and stakeholders to explain the process and procedures supporting students with diverse learning needs. School policies need to be developed with conscious awareness of different efforts from all stakeholders (Badran & Toprak, 2020). Teachers and leaders must work together to draft clear statements of policy, a clear implementation plan, and a clear evaluation process to support continuous improvement. School leadership must maintain a consistent vision, a well-designed strategic plan, and positive relationships with members of the education system. Also, school policies must include all stakeholders to support change (Ibrahim & Hozayin, 2006).

The participants reported the absence of a clear, structured organizing system to serve students with diverse learning needs in their school. After the training, they reported that they need a well-planned model like the Schoolhouse Model, which is grounded in administrative leadership and support. As Villa and Thousands (2016) pointed out, the school leaders articulate the vision, build the staff capacity for the inclusive learning environment, provide resources and incentives, and design and activate action planning. As mentioned in Chapter One, the role of supportive leadership for academic diversity is critical (Furney et al., 2005; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Lambrecht et al., 2020; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002; Waldron et al., 2011). The situation in these Egyptian international schools, as described by the participants, is characterized by a lack of knowledge, support, and governance to allow collaboration, monitoring, and a reporting system between school management and teachers.

The role of authentic transformational leaders was examined in the intervention. Participants agreed that an authentic leader acts as a role model and works ethically towards the benefits of all students' achievement. From a social cognitive perspective, followers observe their leaders' behavior and take them as a role model to maximize benefits and have optimal

outcomes (Bandura,1977). In the school context, authentic transformational leaders' positive behavior is expected to influence the teachers and staff's thoughts and actions and lead them towards more inclusive practices to support academic diversity.

Participants highlighted the issues related to teachers' qualifications throughout the inclusive leadership training. The school leaders emphasized the lack of qualifications and collaboration regarding both general educators and support staff. This finding is two-fold. Many teachers are not certified in Egypt, and the general teachers' education and development lack inclusive training. In Egypt, teachers' qualifications and teaching licensure are a pressing issue, as previously mentioned (Badran & Toprak, 2020; OECD, 2015). For example, the AUC offers a Professional Educator Diploma, which has four different tracks (PED-AUC, 2020). None of these tracks support academic diversity since they do not have infused courses for special and gifted education. A stand-alone PED track was designed to support academic diversity in 2014; this program was discontinued after graduating only one cohort of 12 educators due to a lack of enrollment (R. Hozayin, personal communication, January 29, 2021).

According to the western literature, attempts have been directed to improve general education teachers' capacity to support students with learning needs (Blanton et al., 2011). Research underlined the significance of dually certified teachers to serve academic diversity, where preservice teachers must complete their initial preparation with the knowledge and competencies required to successfully join the profession and meet the needs of students with diverse learning needs. To open the door for future teachers' development, dual certification allows teachers to apply knowledge and skills that are needed to educate students with learning difficulties and gifted ones as well. Blanton et al. (2011) proposed an integrated program that redesigned prospective general and special education teachers' training curriculum to develop

specialized experiences and licenses built on a common base of knowledge. Also, they redefined the role of the support teacher as a consultant and a co-teacher in the general classroom (Blanton et al., 2011). Infused courses of special and gifted education are recommended to be added to teacher training and general education certification.

The current situation in the Egyptian learning contexts as reported by the participants contradicts the national efforts to improve education for all students. The emphasis on equitable learning opportunities for all students in general education classrooms is evident (The Arab Republic Constitution, 2014; OECD, 2015; UNICEF,2020). Yet, the current findings revealed major barriers facing academic diversity in Egypt, which are the owner's perceptions, leadership knowledge and competencies, and teachers' qualifications. After the limitations of the study are discussed, these challenges are addressed through a presentation of several recommendations that may support academic diversity in Egyptian international schools.

Limitations and Implications for Future Practices

There are several limitations in addition to the design limitations previously noted in Chapter Four. The limitations of the study also include: the sample size, intervention length, and absence of a comparison group. The study sample consisted of only nine school leaders from five different international schools in New Cairo. A small sample of Egyptian international school leaders from the same demographic area limits the potential scope of this study's generalizability A larger sample of school leaders from the public and private sectors might reveal more information about the nature of the phenomenon and the effectiveness of university-led training Additionally, four participants work together at the same school, a working relationship that may have influenced their participation and freedom to share their stories and thoughts during the training.

This inclusive leadership training was conducted for three weeks in October, which may not have been enough time to affect the change in leadership inclusive practices. This training was shortened due to time constraints raising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research on this intervention should occur over a longer period, such as an entire semester, as recommended by participants.

Finally, the absence of a comparison group indicates that the study results may not be generalizable to other public and private sectors in Egyptian school contexts. Comparing the conditions of leaders in international schools to a matched control group would likely increase the external validity of these results (Rossi, et al., 2004). Although the focus of this study was not on student learning outcomes, future research is needed to determine how inclusive leadership knowledge and practices influence student learning outcomes. Future research is needed to explicitly connect positive learning outcomes with inclusive leadership using a larger sample size in a variety of Egyptian school settings to confirm the results from the current study.

Referring to the logic model of this study (see Appendix I), in terms of the proposed short-term change, results from this study indicated that school leaders are more knowledgeable, in term of legal, instructional, and organizational practices supporting inclusive policies and practices. Also, they are more reflective and analytical concerning administrative dilemmas to support inclusive practices in their schools. However, participants were less preceptive about topics such as action planning and building PLCs for academic diversity in their schools. As a medium-term outcome of this inclusive leadership intervention, school leaders would lead the collaborative interdisciplinary team meetings and make data-driven decisions to support the achievement of students with diverse learning needs. As for a long-term outcome, school leaders will be more inclusive to support students' achievement and teachers' development, creating an

inclusive learning environment for all. Also, the intervention would inform principal standards and help in creating plausible policies and procedures for academic diversity in regular schools. Future research could focus on some of the medium- and long-term objectives presented in the logic model.

Understanding the inclusive leadership intervention outcomes, including increases in participant knowledge of inclusive leadership, could provide critical information that could transform leadership practices and development programs in Egypt. This section discusses the implications for those who serve and support students with diverse learning needs. As previously mentioned in Chapter Three, the leader for change in an inclusive learning environment must have positive psychological traits that are modeled by the school staff. The authentic transformational leader for inclusion motivates and shares knowledge to support decision-making processes. This type of leadership must be included and infused in principal preparation programs and professional development training. Professional development of inclusive leadership addresses knowledge gaps by enhancing school leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Fundamental knowledge of inclusive education and leadership and academic diversity are considered areas of development, per the intervention's findings. Collaboration, building PLCs, and action planning are also practices that must be taken into account when designing professional development opportunities for Egyptian leaders. School leaders must learn how to design collaborative opportunities for teachers and to support teachers to work together as teams. Also, building on-going PLC to support shared knowledge, professional learning, and decision making for academic diversity is essential to enhance academic diversity for all. This type of preparation program and training will inform the professional standards for Egyptian inclusive principals.

Recommendations

This section includes a set of recommendations that involves school-level decision-makers and school support systems, future authentic leadership training, teachers' inclusive training, and some considerations for online training based on the participants' insights. First, participants highlighted the importance of influencing the school owner's perceptions to support all students' achievement. They recommended that school owners must understand the benefits and the long-term gains that can stem from enhancing support systems to accommodate students with diverse learning needs in their schools. They indicated that human right-based arguments with the decision-makers at the school level are not enough and that more practical solutions are needed to convince the private school owners of the urgency of implementing evidence-based systems and programs to support all students. Research has indicated that improved learning and behavioral outcomes occur when inclusive practices are applied (Parnell, 2017). Also, participants suggested designing an affordable data-driven support model that could be established in for-profit private schools in Egypt. In this way, academic and organizational goals coincide, which may positively influence the decision-making in support of academic diversity in Egypt. Designing an affordable data-driven support model in Egyptian international schools needs to be considered for future investigation.

Second, according to the participants, school leaders' knowledge and competencies are not adequate to implement a school system for academic diversity. The intervention revealed the lack of understanding of key concepts, including authentic transformational leadership traits and styles, which support building an inclusive community. Also, this type of leadership practice, which is essential for collaboration and IEP planning (Lambrecht et, al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2008; Marston et al., 2003), is absent. Knowledge of authentic leadership supports the skills

needed to collaborate with others. However, the participants' results indicated that the least developed subskills are transparency and balanced processing. The authentic leadership literature and this study's findings may inform the recommended training to equip Egyptian principals with adapted practices. Egyptian authentic leaders attempt to understand the individual considerations of their teachers and build their inclusive capacity to be able to support academic diversity in their schools. Also, Egyptian authentic leaders will be able to share their inclusive knowledge to raise teachers' awareness of inclusive education and new education trends to enhance all students' achievement. Egyptian authentic leaders motivate their teams of teachers and build their collaborative and analytical skills to support the learning process of students with diverse needs. Egyptian authentic leaders act as role models to build a positive mindset for academic diversity. As previously mentioned, the study' participants shared their concerns about pitfalls of authentic leadership, which may be mitigated through training. Therefore, principal standards must support academic diversity and must be reflected in preparation programs for inclusive leadership to support leaders' inclusive knowledge, competencies, and dispositions. Evidence-based courses in general professional leader diplomas are recommended to support the job demands of today's teachers and students' needs.

Third, regarding teacher preparation and training, participants suggested improvement in teachers' training to support academic diversity. Teaching standards must reflect the necessity to enhance their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support all students. Infused courses or targeted workshops must include various topics about the inclusive learning environment and supporting students with diverse learning needs such as identification, differentiation for academic diversity, co-teaching and collaboration, PLC for academic diversity, and dealing with

parents. Furthermore, dual certification is recommended for both general and special education teachers.

Finally, multiple participants in the inclusive leadership intervention commented on the duration of the training, the topics' technicality, and participants' individual considerations. For future recommendations, the inclusive training duration should be doubled, providing at least two months instead of one to have a more long-term beneficial impact on participants. This adjustment would allow more time to read and discuss special and gifted education topics and key concepts in-depth. Also, the relatively short duration of the inclusive intervention had neither ongoing training experiences nor clinical visits, which would have allowed participants to have more time to use and implement the inclusive knowledge and skills in their schools. It is recommended to design more authentic, practical experiences to enhance their skills and abilities through extended duration inclusive training program and building ongoing PLCs for academic diversity that would allow for this application, evaluation, and feedback process in their actual schools while they are still engaged as participants in the inclusive training. Furthermore, supporting the individual needs of the inclusive leadership training participants is recommended, through small group and individual meetings, as previously mentioned, to allow the training providers to understand and be responsive to participants' professional needs. Supporting their individual considerations may increase the leaders' engagement and may mitigate the tension among participants, especially at the beginning of the training.

Conclusion

By the end of my journey, I would dedicate Michelangelo's quote to all educators and leaders "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." Seeing implies adapting. It is our responsibilities to see and recognize the unmet needs of our students and improve the

different layers of the systems that encompass them. The legislative foundation exists; we need a clear implementation plan from Egyptian authentic transformational leaders who build the teachers' capacity and employ inclusive practices that include all students.

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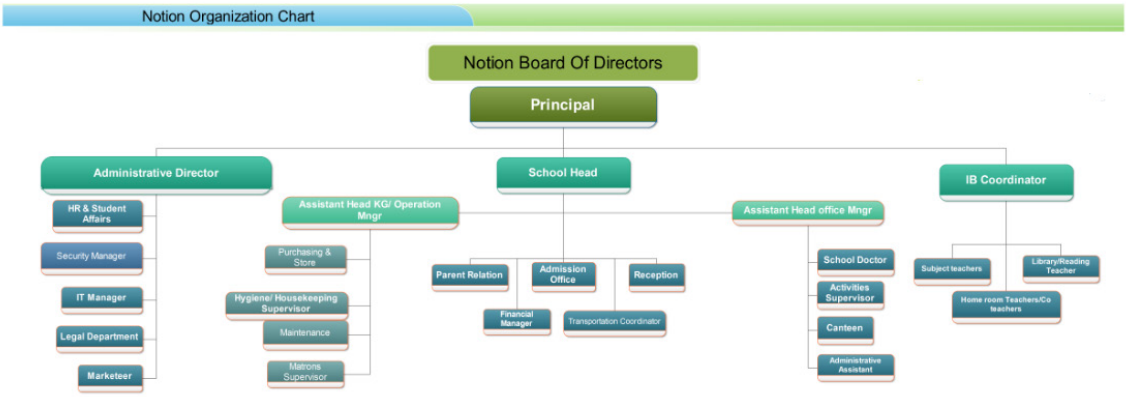
Appendix A

The Organizational Chart for School A (Upper Chart) and B (Lower Chart)



Appendix B

Inclusive Policy, School B

Policy:

Parents who choose to enroll their kids in the school are informed that the school benefits from a scholar psychology service under the support and so, therefore, it is possible that at some point in their child's education, he might be seen by a school counselor.

The classroom observations are validated by the educational team who judges the need and frequency of such meetings with the school counselor.

The school psychologist is subject to professional and medical confidentiality. The latter will be respected except in cases of endangerment of a student.

Only the school counselor himself/herself, (the other school counselors,) and the school principal can consult the files. The psychologist is the one to decide what information is to be shared or not shared.

Early Childhood

The child may be seen once individually and once in a classroom observation before parents are notified of the decision to proceed with psychology support.

- A member of the teams informs the parents through an interview or a letter of the decision to help a student or pay extra attention to him/her.
- If the parents make the choice to get external help, a communication should be made between the school counselor and the external help.

Middle School

The student could come see the counselor on his own.

In this case, the student could be seen individually once before the parents are notified:

- A member of the concerned team informs the family.
- The student has his parents sign the authorization document before handing it to the psychologist.
- In all cases, the programme coordinator concerned as well as the support Head are notified by email in the next 24 hours by the counselor.

Admission

Will be seen by the support head or the counselor:

Any family that presents itself to the admissions with a life event:

- War trauma or natural disaster
- Death of one of the parents or family members
- Other traumas: grave illness of a parent or a student, rape, psychiatric or suicidal history…

All students who are suspected not to be developing normally (after being subject to different tests) by the pedagogic responsible.

- The appointment with the psychologist permits to anticipate the difficulties, to give school education related advice, and to get adapted as soon as possible to the needs of the student, and to implicate external services regarding his/her schooling (external screening, re-education, psychological counseling, external assistance…)

Support Classes Section:

Support classes in: Arabic- English- Mathematics

Policy:

A. Support classes are a privilege, only those who work hard, make efforts, and have a good behavior will benefit from the latter after a report form showing that is prepared by the educational team. A student who does not work in the classroom and/or at home will not be offered support classes. The class teacher may refuse to send a student to the support because of his attitude and his lack of interest and investment in schoolwork.

Support classes are for well-focused students.

These classes complement the work already done in class.

B. Support classes happen either in free periods, during class-time or after the school day. Punctuality, integrity, behavior, and tardiness rules and regulations are the same as in class.

C. The student must come to class with his school bag and/or all the material he usually uses in his regular classes (such as books, notebooks,)

Support Languages

Policy:

The school offers students the reinforcement or the learning of languages.

The School offers to foreign (Non-Egyptian) students the possibility to be schooled by proposing them a personalized programme which would assist them in their learning of the French language. The ESL: English as a Second Language for all old students beginners in English.

Learning Difficulties Support Section

Policy

The philosophy and the practices of the IB in the specialized education domain is particularly significant. Diversity is one of the most important cornerstones of the IB world schools which themselves offer a real and equitable learning curriculum to all the students following the IB programme.

In this context, the school reviews all files and all special education applications.

The feasibility of schooling a student with special educational needs is studied thoroughly either during his admission period by a multidisciplinary team or after the occurrence of an incident during his schooling.

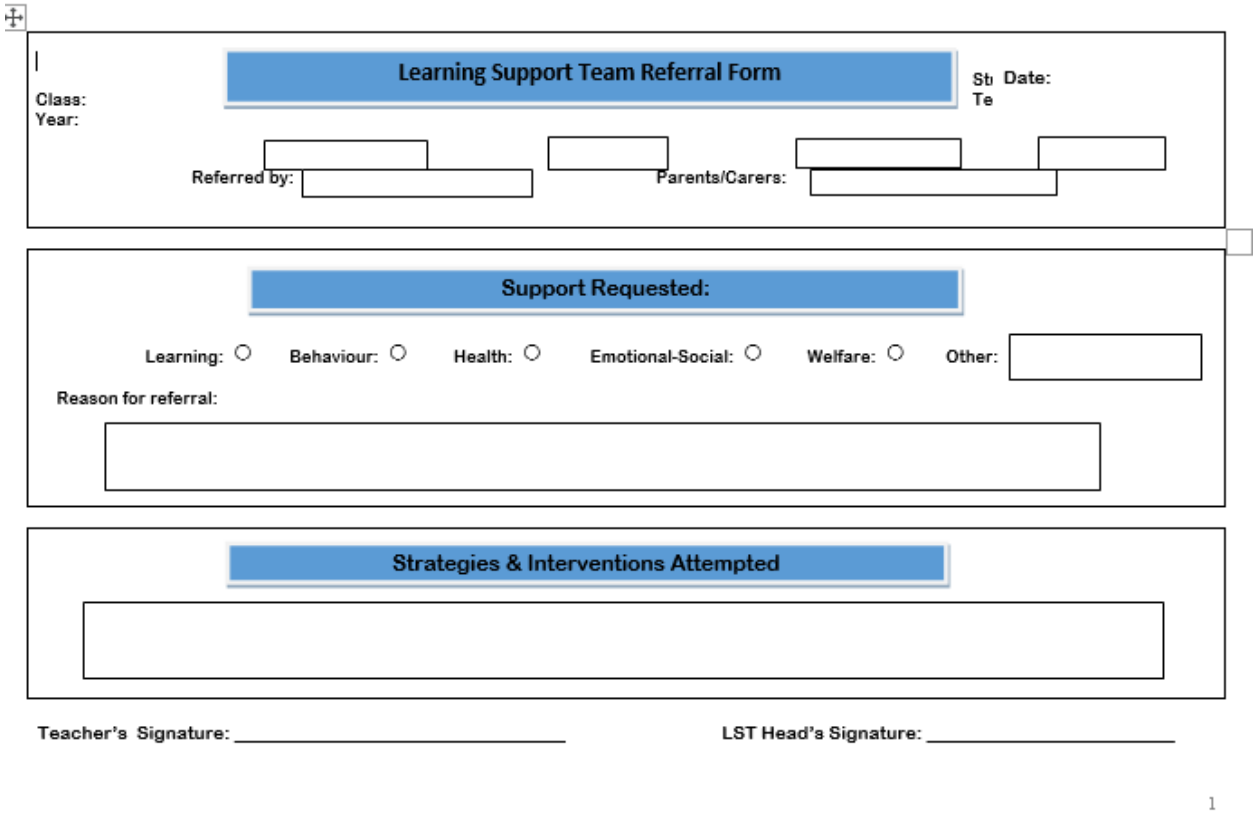
- In the case of educational disorders or disabilities, the school has the right to propose an aid programme that is adapted to the needs of the students and that meets the requirements inside and outside of the school. The school also has the right not to proceed with the schooling of the student if the contract isn't respected by the family.

- Any student whose parents have pointed him out as one with an educational disorder or disability will be seen by the head of the support or the school psychologist during registration in order to determine the possibility of his schooling at the School (find out more about his own individual, family and educational history.)

- The student and the parents will each be seen at least once in two separate interviews in order to assess the needs of the student and their compatibility with the Human resources and material of the school. This would allow the school to better analyze the family's situation, the coherence of the project, and the grade levels of the student.

Appendix C

Referral Form, School B



Learning Support Team Referral Form

Class:
Year:

St Date:
Te

Referred by:

Parents/Carers:

Support Requested:

Learning: ○ Behaviour: ○ Health: ○ Emotional-Social: ○ Welfare: ○ Other:

Reason for referral:

Strategies & Interventions Attempted

Teacher's Signature: _____

LST Head's Signature: _____

1

Appendix D

The Survey of Practices with Students of Varying Needs (SOP)

1- A student who is learning disabled will usually be a low achiever in most subjects.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	valid	1	1	1	1	
	Strongly Agree	4	4	4	85.1	32
	Agree	28	27.7	27.7	28.7	
	Disagree	48	47.5	47.5	76.2	63
	Strongly Disagree	15	14.9	14.9	100	
	Do Not Know	5	5	5	81.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

2- The regular curriculum will challenge all students if the teacher is interesting and exciting.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	32	31.7	31.7	95	62
	Agree	30	29.7	29.7	32.7	
	Do Not Konw	3	3	3	63.4	31
	Disagree	28	27.7	27.7	60.4	
	Strongly Disagree	5	5	5	100	
	Total	101	100	100		

3- Gifted students can make it on their own without teacher direction.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	4	4	4	76.2	30
	Agree	26	25.7	25.7	27.7	
	Disagree	44	43.6	43.6	71.3	68
	Strongly Disagree	24	23.8	23.8	100	
	Do Not Konw	1	1	1	72.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

4- Remedial students find it difficult to work on their own without teacher direction.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		1	1	1	1	
	Strongly Agree	30	29.7	29.7	100	89
	Agree	59	58.4	58.4	59.4	
	Disagree	8	7.9	7.9	67.3	8
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	
	Do Not Konw	3	3	3	70.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

5- It is important to assess students' knowledge about the topic before beginning a new unit.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		1	1	1	1	
	Strongly Agree	71	70.3	70.3	98	95
	Agree	24	23.8	23.8	24.8	
	Disagree	2	2	2	26.7	4
	Strongly Disagree	2	2	2	100	
	Do Not Know	1	1	1	27.7	
	Total	101	100	100		

6- If tests indicate that a student has acquired basic skills, the teacher should omit the regular assignments and modify the curriculum for that student.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	17	16.8	16.8	95	61
	Agree	44	43.6	43.6	45.5	
	Disagree	24	23.8	23.8	69.3	29
	Strongly Disagree	5	5	5	100	
	Do Not Know	9	8.9	8.9	78.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

7-Gifted students will take their regular assignments and make them more challenging on their own.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	14	13.9	13.9	90.1	35
	Agree	21	20.8	20.8	22.8	
	Disagree	47	46.5	46.5	69.3	57
	Strongly Disagree	10	9.9	9.9	100	
	Do Not know	7	6.9	6.9	76.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

8- If students have already mastered some of the material before starting a unit, they should be given alternative assignments.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		4	4	4	4	
	Strongly Agree	25	24.8	24.8	100	83
	Agree	58	57.4	57.4	61.4	
	Disagree	10	9.9	9.9	71.3	10
	Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	
	Do Not Know	4	4	4	75.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

9-Remedial students may need additional time to practice to master basic skills.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	44	43.6	43.6	99	92
	Agree	48	47.5	47.5	50.5	
	Disagree	1	1	1	51.5	2
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	100	
	Do Not Konw	4	4	4	55.4	
	Total	101	100	100		

10-An effective way to identify gifted students is to look for students with the highest grades.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		4	4	4	4	
	Strongly Agree	6	5.9	5.9	61.4	14

	Agree	8	7.9	7.9	11.9	
	Disagree	42	41.6	41.6	53.5	81
	Strongly Disagree	39	38.6	38.6	100	
	Do Not Know	2	2	2	55.4	
	Total	101	100	100		

11- In the classroom, content should be varied to match students' interests and abilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	64	63.4	63.4	99	93
	Agree	29	28.7	28.7	31.7	
	Disagree	4	4	4	35.6	5
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	100	
	Do Not Know	0	0	0	0	
	Total	101	100	100		

12- To assure that all students have the same knowledge base, it is appropriate to present curriculum information to all students in the same way.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	3	3	3	71.3	22
	Agree	19	18.8	18.8	21.8	
	Disagree	45	44.6	44.6	66.3	72
	Strongly Disagree	29	28.7	28.7	100	
	Do Not know	2	2	2	68.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

13- Allowing gifted students to work on assignments that are different from the rest of the students is playing favorites and fostering elitism.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
		3	3	3	3	
Valid	Strongly Agree	13	12.9	12.9	78.2	46
	Agree	33	32.7	32.7	35.6	

	Disagree	21	20.8	20.8	56.4	43
	Strongly Disagree	22	21.8	21.8	100	
	Do Not know	9	8.9	8.9	65.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

14- Students who are learning disabled are usually poor readers.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	5	5	5	90.1	37
	Agree	32	31.7	31.7	33.7	
	Disagree	41	40.6	40.6	74.3	51
	Strongly Disagree	10	9.9	9.9	100	
	Do Not Know	11	10.9	10.9	85.1	
	Total	101	100	100		

15- Average students need to spend most of their time working in teacher-directed activities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	6	5.9	5.9	91.1	40
	Agree	34	33.7	33.7	35.6	
	Disagree	46	45.5	45.5	81.2	55
	Strongly Disagree	9	8.9	8.9	100	
	Do Not know	4	4	4	85.1	
	Total	101	100	100		

16- Gifted students need longer assignments since they work faster.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	16	15.8	15.8	89.1	45
	Agree	29	28.7	28.7	30.7	
	Disagree	40	39.6	39.6	70.3	51
	Strongly Disagree	11	10.9	10.9	100	
	Do Not know	3	3	3	73.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

17- It is important for all students to do workbook exercises, review pages, and textbook assignments because these activities are an integral part of the curriculum.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	12	11.9	11.9	89.1	55
	Agree	43	42.6	42.6	44.6	
	Disagree	27	26.7	26.7	71.3	38
	Strongly Disagree	11	10.9	10.9	100	
	Do Not know	6	5.9	5.9	77.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

18-Working too hard in school leads to burn-out in gifted students.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	14	13.9	13.9	93.1	46
	Agree	32	31.7	31.7	33.7	
	Disagree	27	26.7	26.7	60.4	34
	Strongly Disagree	7	6.9	6.9	100	
	Do Not know	19	18.8	18.8	79.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

19- Remedial students do not do well in most subjects.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	1	1	1	82.2	30
	Agree	29	28.7	28.7	31.7	
	Disagree	44	43.6	43.6	75.2	62
	Strongly Disagree	18	17.8	17.8	100	
	Do Not know	6	5.9	5.9	81.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

20- Learning disabled students who are gifted will need to concentrate their study to remediate their weaknesses so they can go on to use their areas of strength.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	18	17.8	17.8	99	76
	Agree	58	57.4	57.4	59.4	
	Disagree	5	5	5	64.4	6
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	100	
	Do Not know	17	16.8	16.8	81.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

21- Gifted students are easy to identify in the classroom.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	33	32.7	32.7	97	72
	Agree	39	38.6	38.6	40.6	
	Disagree	20	19.8	19.8	60.4	23
	Strongly Disagree	3	3	3	100	
	Do Not know	4	4	4	64.4	
	Total	101	100	100		

22- Work that is too easy or boring frustrates a gifted child just as work that is too difficult frustrates an average learner.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	57	56.4	56.4	99	93
	Agree	36	35.6	35.6	37.6	
	Disagree	4	4	4	41.6	5
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	100	
	Do Not know	1	1	1	42.6	
	Total	101	100	100		

23- Assignment length and homework assignments are usually designed to meet the needs of the average learner.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	18	17.8	17.8	100	84

	Agree	66	65.3	65.3	67.3	
	Disagree	13	12.9	12.9	80.2	13
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	
	Do Not know	2	2	2	82.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

24- Gifted students should be encouraged to direct their own learning.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	38	37.6	37.6	99	80
	Agree	42	41.6	41.6	43.6	
	Disagree	11	10.9	10.9	54.5	12
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	100	
	Do Not know	7	6.9	6.9	61.4	
	Total	101	100	100		

26- Having some students work on different assignments results in unfair grading.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	6	5.9	5.9	86.1	32
	Agree	26	25.7	25.7	27.7	
	Disagree	47	46.5	46.5	74.3	61
	Strongly Disagree	14	13.9	13.9	100	
	Do Not know	6	5.9	5.9	80.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

27- Students who differ markedly in ability level from the average learner should be taught in special classes to fully meet their needs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	7	6.9	6.9	91.1	38
	Agree	31	30.7	30.7	32.7	
	Disagree	43	42.6	42.6	75.2	52
	Strongly Disagree	9	8.9	8.9	100	

	Do Not know	9	8.9	8.9	84.2
	Total	101	100	100	

28- Some underachievers are actually gifted children.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	27	26.7	26.7	97	77
	Agree	50	49.5	49.5	51.5	
	Disagree	10	9.9	9.9	61.4	13
	Strongly Disagree	3	3	3	100	
	Do Not know	9	8.9	8.9	70.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

29- While it is appropriate for students to work on different assignments commensurate with their ability levels, the means of assessment should be the same for all students.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	9	8.9	8.9	90.1	51
	Agree	42	41.6	41.6	44.6	
	Disagree	32	31.7	31.7	76.2	32
	Strongly Disagree	10	9.9	9.9	100	
	Do Not know	5	5	5	81.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

30- Remedial students have difficulty grasping concepts and need a more fact-based curriculum.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	12	11.9	11.9	97	59
	Agree	47	46.5	46.5	48.5	
	Disagree	30	29.7	29.7	78.2	33
	Strongly Disagree	3	3	3	100	
	Do Not know	7	6.9	6.9	85.1	
	Total	101	100	100		

31- If a gifted student is doing poorly in spelling, it is necessary to deal with the weakness in spelling before presenting more advanced content in other areas.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	12	11.9	11.9	96	45
	Agree	33	32.7	32.7	34.7	
	Disagree	42	41.6	41.6	76.2	46
	Strongly Disagree	4	4	4	100	
	Do Not know	8	7.9	7.9	84.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

32- All students in the class should take the same test to show mastery of the material in a unit.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	8	7.9	7.9	92.1	60
	Agree	52	51.5	51.5	53.5	
	Disagree	25	24.8	24.8	78.2	33
	Strongly Disagree	8	7.9	7.9	100	
	Do Not know	6	5.9	5.9	84.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

33- Removing special education and gifted students from the classroom for special classes is disruptive to the class schedule.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		2	2	2	2	
	Strongly Agree	9	8.9	8.9	90.1	47
	Agree	38	37.6	37.6	39.6	
	Disagree	26	25.7	25.7	65.3	36
	Strongly Disagree	10	9.9	9.9	100	
	Do Not know	16	15.8	15.8	81.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

34- In teaching gifted students, teachers should modify the content only, since all students need to use the same processes and can generate the same projects.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	6	5.9	5.9	87.1	41
	Agree	35	34.7	34.7	37.6	
	Disagree	32	31.7	31.7	69.3	45
	Strongly Disagree	13	12.9	12.9	100	
	Do Not know	12	11.9	11.9	81.2	
	Total	101	100	100		

35- Having gifted students work on individual projects or assignments isolates them from the rest of the class.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		3	3	3	3	
	Strongly Agree	14	13.9	13.9	88.1	35
	Agree	21	20.8	20.8	23.8	
	Disagree	47	46.5	46.5	70.3	59
	Strongly Disagree	12	11.9	11.9	100	
	Do Not know	4	4	4	74.3	
	Total	101	100	100		

36- Grouping students is more detrimental than beneficial.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid		4	4	4	4	
	Strongly Agree	7	6.9	6.9	65.3	26
	Agree	19	18.8	18.8	22.8	
	Disagree	30	29.7	29.7	52.5	65
	Strongly Disagree	35	34.7	34.7	100	
	Do Not know	6	5.9	5.9	58.4	
	Total	101	100	100		

Part II:

In thinking about students in the classroom, please rank the following three groups according to the amount of time and attention each one receives. Place a 1 beside the group receiving the

most of your attention. Place a 2 besides the next group. Place a 3 beside the group receiving the least amount of attention. If you feel you give equal time to all groups, place an E in each blank.

–	1–	2–	3–	Total	Weighted Average
– Special Education Student	46.88% 45	44.79% 43	8.33% 8	96	1.61
– Average Student	29.47% 28	67.37% 64	3.16% 3	95	1.74
– Gifted Student	9.57% 9	47.87% 45	42.55% 40	94	2.33

Part III:

How confident do you feel about the following? Rate from 1 (no confidence) to 5 (very confident) by circling the response that best describes your feelings:

–	**1–**	**2–**	**3–**	**4–**	**5–**	**TOTAL–**	**WEIGHTED AVERAGE–**
Adapting my lessons to meet the needs of gifted learners	5.15 % 5	12.37% 12	32.99 % 32	35.05% 34	14.43 % 14	97	3.41
Adapting my lessons to meet the needs of remedial learners	3.09 % 3	13.40% 13	32.99 % 32	42.27% 41	8.25 % 8	97	3.39
Accommodating varying levels of ability in my class	1.03 % 1	6.19% 6	24.74 % 24	44.33%43	23.71 % 23	97	3.84
Assessing where students are and designing appropriate lessons	1.04 % 1	3.13% 3	16.67 % 16	43.75% 42	35.42 % 34	96	4.09

Individualizing instruction to meet the needs of gifted learners	5.32 % 5	13.83% 13	23.40 % 22	40.43% 38	17.02 % 16	94	3.50
– Individualizing instruction to meet the needs of remedial learners	4.17 % 4	12.50% 12	29.17 % 28	39.58% 38	14.58 % 14	96	3.48
– Identifying gifted students	3.16 % 3	4.21% 4	18.95 % 18	31.58% 30	42.11 % 40	95	4.05
– Identifying remedial students	3.13 % 3	3.13% 3	17.71 % 17	37.50% 36	38.54 % 37	96	4.05

Part IV:

Which specific techniques, activities, or instructional strategies do you think you would use with each of the following learners in the classroom? Place a check in the appropriate column. Do not check strategies unfamiliar to you**.**

–	**Gifted Students**–	**Average Students**	**Special Needs Students**	**Total**	**Weighted Average**
– Ability grouping	11.76% 4	52.94% 18	35.29% 12	34	2.24
– Activities to enhance creativity	56.76% 21	24.32% 9	18.92% 7	37	1.62
– Cooperativ e learning	5.26% 2	65.79% 25	28.95% 11	38	2.24
– Curriculum compacting	45.16% 14	32.26% 10	22.58% 7	31	1.77
– Drill and practice	5.88% 2	32.35 % 11	61.76% 21	34	2.56
– Higher level	84.62 % 33	12.82 % 5	2.56% 1	39	1.18

thinking activities					
– Independent study	63.89% 23	22.22% 8	13.89% 5	36	1.50
– Individual instruction	8.57% 3	11.43% 4	80.00% 28	35	2.71
– Interdisciplinary activities	25.93% 7	59.26% 16	14.81% 4	27	1.89
– Learning centres	8.11% 3	56.76% 21	35.14% 13	37	2.27
– Problem-solving activities	51.35% 19	32.43% 12	16.22% 6	37	1.65
– Projects	32.43% 12	56.76% 21	10.81% 4	37	1.78
– Values training	27.59% 8	44.83% 13	27.59% 8	29	2.00
– Workbook exercises	5.41% 2	64.86% 24	29.73% 11	37	2.24

Appendix E

Teacher's Focus Group Questions

Focus Group

Focus Group Participant Demographics

Date: Time: Place:

Age: 20-30 30-40

Gender: F/M

What is your Grade Level/ Area of Teaching?

KG PreK Grade3 G1

How long have you been in practice? 3/5/3/5/7

- ✓ Less than 5
- ✓ 6 to 10
- ✓ more than 10

FOCUS GROUP INTRODUCTION WELCOME

Thanks for agreeing to be part of the focus group. We appreciate your willingness to participate.

PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUPS

You will be asked by _____to conduct the focus groups. The reason we are having these focus groups is to find out your understanding of differentiated instruction and its challenges in your school. We need your input and want you to share your honest and open thoughts with us.

GROUND RULES

1. WE WANT YOU TO DO THE TALKING. We would like everyone to participate. I may call on you if I have not heard from you in a while.
2. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. We want to hear a wide range of opinions.
3. WHAT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE We want folks to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up.
4. WE WILL BE TAPE RECORDING THE GROUP We want to capture everything you have to say. We do not identify anyone by name in our report. You will remain anonymous.

Focus Group Questions

1. How do you identify weak students in your classroom? how do you identify gifted students in your classroom?
2. What do you do to support weak students in your classroom?
3. How do you allow/ implement this type of practices in your classroom activities and summative tests?
   Additional time during tests and assignments/ Content should be varied to match students' interests and abilities/ Assignment length and homework assignments are usually designed to meet the needs of the average learner/assess students' knowledge about the topic before beginning a new unit.

4. How do you support gifted students' weaknesses in your classroom?
5. What are the tools you used to identify the gifted underachievers? What are the types of accommodations you used that support their learning in classroom?
6. Do they move? Does the school have a pull-out system for enrichment as well as remedial teaching?

Transcript of Teacher Focus Group Responses

- We can know who is weak or not weak in our classes, this is easy. Students come to class happy to work or they try to avoid tasks. They may feel it challenging. Also, students with high potential are easy to spot on. They know everything. It is too hard to help them to grow sometimes.

- Students with problem in my class can work with the co-teacher or they can work on an easier worksheet. Of course, we give them more time to grasp concepts and to finish their work. This is normal.

- Our gifted children are talkative and sometimes naughty. They do not want to listen to instruction. I give them tasks like help me or to help some of their friends. That is it.

- We have a teacher at school who helps weak students, but we do not know what they are doing or covering with them. This is not clear to us. We know that this help is good for the students, but it is unclear.

- We feel overwhelmed and frustrated working with so many different abilities in one class. We lack administration support. It is so frustrated. Sometimes, we do not know what to do.

Appendix F

School Owner and Leadership Survey Responses

1. What are the qualifications needed or criteria stipulated to hire your school principal?

School A (school owner): Post graduate certification in education experience in school administration
School B (school owner): Experience in teaching in addition to leading pedagogical positions Interpersonal skills and being a good listener with good communication skills, collaboration skills Organization skills

2. Who is responsible for designing the school organizational chart?

School A(school owner): Board of Directors
School B(school owner): The board hired a consultancy agency to structure the school

3. Who is responsible for designing the job description for the school principal?

School A(school owner): Board of Directors

School B(school owner): The board hired a consultancy agency to design job description

4. What are the school principal's responsibilities at school?

School A (school principal): is responsible of school image and operational process and student achievement

School B (school principal): is responsible of the execution of the school vision and mission is responsible of drafting the school policies and procedures is responsible to lead the instructional team Manage, evaluate and supervise effective and clear procedures for the operation and functioning of the school consistent with the philosophy, mission, values and goals of the school maintaining the school vision maintaining Instructional excellence maintaining school operational procedure maintaining a positive school culture.

How often does the principal observe instruction in primary classroom? What are the school procedures after the principal' observation?

School A (school principal): Biweekly, the principal meets the supervisors to discuss development
School B (school principal): Once a week, constructive feedback and meeting with the pedagogical leadership team and teachers. The principal class visits are not for feedback and development. This is the job of the academic coordinator. The principal's class visits are for general maintenance of the learning process and informed decision making. The information the principal collects from class visits is used in: Discussing the situation with the coordinator based on authentic observation. Guiding or redirecting anything that does not fall in place with the school vision, educational excellence, positive school culture ...etc.

5. **Does the school principal plan the curriculum with teachers? If yes, what is the principal's role in planning the curriculum?**

School A (school principal): the principal is responsible to set the guidelines and standards of academic**s**

School B (school principal): Support the learning differences, help in designing the curriculum, and provide professional training to specific skills and knowledge. The principal overlooks the planning process and makes sure it aligns with school standards.

6. **Are the principal's decisions, concerning students' academics, data-driven? Please discuss the school's procedures to support the decision-making process**

School A (school principal): The collection of data happens sometimes formal and most of the time informal. Regular meetings with all members of the administrate staff to consistently share information is what keeps decisions informed.

School B(school principal): The school has referral process, so teachers can discuss the students' learning differences with specialists and school pedagogical leadership team.

7. **Does the school principal have a yearly professional development goal-based plan? If the answer is yes, what are the topics of this professional development plan?**

School A (school principal): No

School B (school principal): Yes, differentiated Instruction, curriculum designing, positive discipline, universal design, and IB practices.

Question	School A Principal Response	School B Principal Response
1. Rate the school principal's accountability for student learning.	Strongly accountable	Strongly accountable
2. Rate the school principal's performance on the following [Analyse classroom instruction]	Often	Sometimes
3. Rate the school principal's performance on the following [Use evidence of classroom instruction and student performance to guide teacher support and development]	Always	Sometimes
4. Rate the school principal's performance on the following [Strategically utilize resources based on evidence of classroom instruction and student performance]	Sometimes	Always
5. Rate the school principal's performance on the following [Create a reflective and collaborative staff culture]	Always	Always
6. Rate the school principal's performance on the following [Guide and lead data-based decision making]	Always	Always

Appendix G

The Policy Advisors' Interview

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Soha Elzalabany and I am a researcher from JHU. The Problem of Practice focuses on the inadequate school leadership preparation to support teachers' practices in order to accommodate cognitively diverse learners in elementary international schools in Egypt. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your position in Minister of Education/National Council for Disability. As explained, you are free to stop the interview at any time. This interview will be audio-recorded and will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Thank you for your time.

Name of person interviewed FIRST NAME SURNAME	
Gender Male _____ Female _____ Tick as appropriate	
Age	
Organization	
Title	
Date of Interview	
Recording number	

Current situation

Could you brief us on the history of policies and ministerial decisions drafted to cater for the academically diverse learners in the Egyptian regular schools?

In the light of the Egyptian Constitution 2014, three articles mention the educational rights of students with learning difficulties and the gifted and talented ones. What are the current situation and measurements to support the academically diverse learners in classroom?

Position and Role in Policies Making

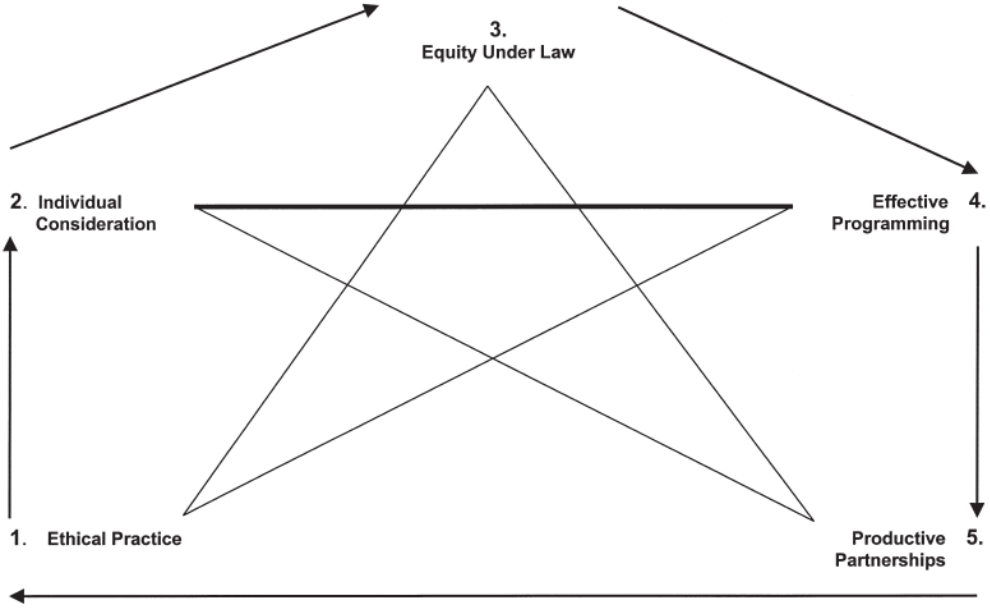
Could you briefly describe your position and how what you do has some implications on drafting policies and procedures to support students with learning difficulties and the gifted ones in the regular classrooms?

Future Steps

What are the different approaches necessary to support cognitively diverse learners in classroom? *Prompted*: in terms of teachers, principals and laws?

Appendix H

Crockett's (2002) Star Model



Appendix I

Inclusive Leadership Program Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	*Participation*	**Short**	**Medium**	**Long**
Certain resources (human/financial/ organizational/ community) are needed to operate inclusive leadership program. **-Develop research-based standards and equity-based curriculum for preparing effective principals** School leaders sign the consent of participation. School leaders are pre-assessed about inclusive leadership content. Two American University in Cairo (AUC) instructors design and teach the course work materials. The course work evidence-based materials are downloaded from the AUC and JHU e-libraries. -Training sessions are in one of the two schools. -Multi-media and IT equipment are available at the school are required; all materials will be uploaded on the shared drive.	If the researcher has access to them, then she can use them to accomplish the planned activities. **Inclusive Leadership Preparation Program is research-based and aligned with Egyptian Inclusive Ministerial Decrees (2015 & 2018)** **1-Coursework** The course work duration is thirty-six hours in four months; it focuses on special and gifted education leadership. The inclusive knowledge includes the legal, instructional, organizational, and collaborative components (Crockett, 2002; DeMatthews, 2015a) **2- Critical Friend Group fostering collaboration and mentorship.** Through the Critical Friends Groups, collaboration and problem-solving skills needed for inclusive education are built. Meeting takes place bi-weekly for four months (Fahey, 2011; Swaffield & MacBeath, 2005).	If the researcher accomplishes the planned activities, then she will hopefully deliver the intended product and service. **Participants are ten school leaders: five from each recruited school.** The leaders are occupying middle manager positions such as School Office Managers. Their years of experience ranged between five to ten with no post-graduate degrees of inclusive education. The leaders are occupying senior managerial positions such as school principals, school heads or vice principals. Their years of experience are more than 15 with no post-graduate degrees of inclusive education.	If the researcher accomplishes the planned activities to the desired extent, then the participants will benefit in certain ways **School Leadership-Related** School leaders are knowledgeable, in term of legal, instructional, organizational practices supporting inclusive classroom practices (Crockett, 2002; DeMatthews, 2015). School leaders gain reflective, and self-awareness skills (Goddard, et al., 2015).	**School Leadership-Related** School leaders collaborate with interdisciplinary team to make data-driven decisions to support the academically diverse students' achievement. School leaders apply the principles of distributive leadership to support academic diversity by creating teacher teams (Balfanz, 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Spillane, 2005).	If these benefits to participants are achieved, then certain changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur. **Student-Related** If these benefits to participants are achieved then regular, international school will be able to accommodate for academically diverse learner's achievement. **Teacher-Related** Inclusive leaders will support teachers' differentiated instruction and pedagogical practices through budgeting, hiring specialist, professional development opportunities enhancing the academically diverse learners' achievement. **National Policy and Standard-Related** this intervention may inform principal standards and help in creating plausible policies and procedures for academic diversity in regular schools.

Appendix J

AUC Committee/ Faculty Qualifications and Experience

Name	Degrees Held & Year Earned	Administrator/ Leadership Experience			Certification of Inclusion Held		Faculty	
		Yes	# of Years	No	Yes	No	Full-time	Part-time
Instructor (researcher)	MA in inclusive education and a doctoral student	√	5 years		√			√
Professor	PHD	√	25years				√	
Dean	PHD	√	18 years			√	√	

Appendix L

The Syllabus

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO | Graduate School of Education

COURSE CONTENT PLANNER

Course Title:	Organizing Systems for Academic Diversity and Differentiated Instruction
Target Audience:	Professional Educator Diploma (PED) Participants
Course pre-requisite:	EDL 001Online
Instructor:	**Soha Ezalabany**
Instructor's email:	sohazalabany@aucegypt.edu

A. Course Description:

This course aims to help school leaders achieve a deeper understanding of how to include students with learning difficulties as well gifted students in regular educational settings. Multi-tiered Support Systems support all students' emotional, social, learning development and achievement.

B. Course Related Professional Standards for Educational Leaders ISLLC (2015):

Standard 2: **Ethics and Professional Norm**

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 3: **Equity and Cultural Responsiveness**

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 4: **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 5: **Community of Care and Support for Student**

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

Standard 6: **Professional Community for Teachers and Staff**

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

(Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015)

C. Learning Outcomes:

1. A leader builds positive working relationships with members of the school community and the local community.
2. A leader designs and manages school systems and differentiated instruction programs that supports academic diversity.
3. A leader collaborates with the school community and teacher leadership to create and implement a shared vision for student achievement.
4. A leader effectively drafts school policies and plans, directs operations and manages resources.

D. Instructional Material:

Instructional Readings:

Robert W. Cole. (2003). Educating Everyone's Children: Diverse Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners (2nd Edition, Association for Supervision & Curriculum.

Spencer, J. Salend. (2005). Creating Inclusive Classroom

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Nieto, S. (2008). Affirmation, solidarity and critique: Moving beyond tolerance in education. In Lee, E, Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.), *Beyond heroes and holidays* (pp. 18-29). Washington, DC: Teaching for Change.

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Talent Development Secondary. (2011, August 9). EWIvideo part 1 [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFPGuHGZztU

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Talent Development Secondary. (2011, August 9). EWI video part 3 [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHfiUpRnhfQ

Watson, C. (Producer). (2014, April 8). Putting student data to the test to identify struggling kids [Audio file]. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/04/08/300587823/puttingstudent-data-to-the-test-to-identify-struggling-kids

E. Exact attendance policy

1. Students must attend every class, for two reasons: (1) the courses are based on interactivity; and (2) to ensure that the required contact hours are achieved for recognition of the certificate.
2. Attendance is mandatory for the entire time period of the class. If a student misses more than 15 minutes in a 2½ hour class (any time during the class) they will be marked absent for the entire class.

3. Students who miss more than two classes will be dropped from the course unless they have had serious health or family problems. (Each class period represents two classes in other academic programs, thus two classes missed represents four classes missed that is the maximum allowed in most programs at AUC).
4. If a student is ill or has an emergency and cannot attend a class, s/he must immediately notify the course instructor by email that they will be absent. If the notification is impossible for valid reasons, then they must let the instructor know as soon as possible, that they recognize they missed a class.
5. Students who miss a class are responsible for making up any work they missed.
6. If an instructor knows in advance that s/he won't be able to be present in a particular class, s/he would indicate this in the syllabus and make appropriate arrangements. If the instructor is ill or has an emergency that forces cancellation of class, students will be notified through emails, SMS, or phone calls.

F. Policy on Academic integrity and Policy on Attendance

In academic matters, mutual responsibility between students, faculty, administrators, and staff, requires cooperation and trust in maintaining the details and spirit of the AUC Code of Academic Ethics. This ensures that a high level of integrity and honesty will be maintained within the academic programs.

S.#	Titles/Sub-titles	Date	Material & Resources	Assignments
S.1	Overview of course goals, expectations, requirements, assessment system, attendance policy and AUC policy and expectations**.** Exploring Beliefs About Leadership styles and traits Inclusive Leadership	10th of October 2020	**Resources:** Course Outline **Video:** **Reading:**	**Formative Assessment:** Ask questions to check understanding and misconception any of the course requirements. **Summative Assessment**: Diversity Assessment (Self-Analysis Reflection Assignment)
S.2	Systems governing Inclusive Education	13th of October 2020	**Video:** **Reading**	**Formative assessment:** Caption Photo Discussion Questioning **Summative assessment:** Exit Ticket
S.3	Programs Promoting Inclusive Education	17th of October 2020	**Video:** **Reading:**	**Formative assessment:** Questioning Doodle: Participants are asked to draw their understanding of the concept **Summative assessment:** (Self-Analysis Reflection Assignment)
S.4	Building Professional Learning Community for Inclusive Education Teacher Teaming	21st of October 2020	**Video**: **Reading:**	**Formative assessment:** Questioning – What do you include in your lesson plan? Group work – Practice presentation of an inclusive school plan template **Summative assessment:** Design a workshop for the school Teacher Teaming to promote inclusive practices.
S.5	Critical Friendship Groups and Action Planning for Inclusive Education	24th of October 2020	**Video**: **Readings:**	**Formative assessment:** Constructive teaching activity Discussion **Summative assessment:**

				(Self-Analysis Reflection Assignment)
S.6	Participant's Presentation and Focus Group Interview	October 31st 2020	**Video**: **Readings:**	**Formative assessment:** Discussion Focus Group Interview **Summative assessment:** Demonstrate a presentation of your role as an agent of change in your school to support all students (LD and GT).

Appendix M

Research Question Matrix

Research Questions (RQ) / Constructs	Instruments/Measures (Items)	Timing	Data Analysis
RQ1: What was the delivered inclusive leadership training and to what extent was it implemented with fidelity?			
Adherence	Field Notes (Appendix N)	Every session - 1x	Emergent coding
Program Implementation: Dosage	Post-session survey (Learner Evaluation of Instruction Form) of participants awareness, objective awareness, and usage of materials- (Appendix O)	After Inclusive Leadership Training – 1x	Descriptive Statistics Reporting of frequencies, means, standard deviations
Participants Responsiveness: Involvement, Participation, Receptivity, Degree of Interpretation, Implementation with students	Observer's Field Notes (Appendix N)	Every session - 1x	Emergent coding
RQ2- What were the school leaders' experiences related to completing inclusive leadership training?			
Participants' Experience of the Intervention	Focus Group (Appendix P)	After Inclusive Leadership Training – 1x	Emergent coding
	Reflective Log (Appendix Q)	3 sessions- x1 1st, 3rd, and 5th session	Emergent coding
RQ3- To what extent does the inclusive leadership intervention improve the school leaders' knowledge and skills about inclusive education principles and practices?			
	Pretest and Posttest: Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership (Appendix R)	Before and After Inclusive	Paired Sample T-Test

Knowledge about Inclusive Leadership		Leadership Training – 1x	
	Focus Group (Appendix P)	After Inclusive Leadership Training – 1x	Emergent coding
Reflective Practice	Reflective logs (Appendix Q)	3 sessions- x1 1st, 3rd, and 5th session	Emergent coding
RQ4 – What are school leaders' perception about authentic leadership?			
Authentic Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire- (Appendix S)	Second session– 1x	Descriptive Analysis

Appendix N

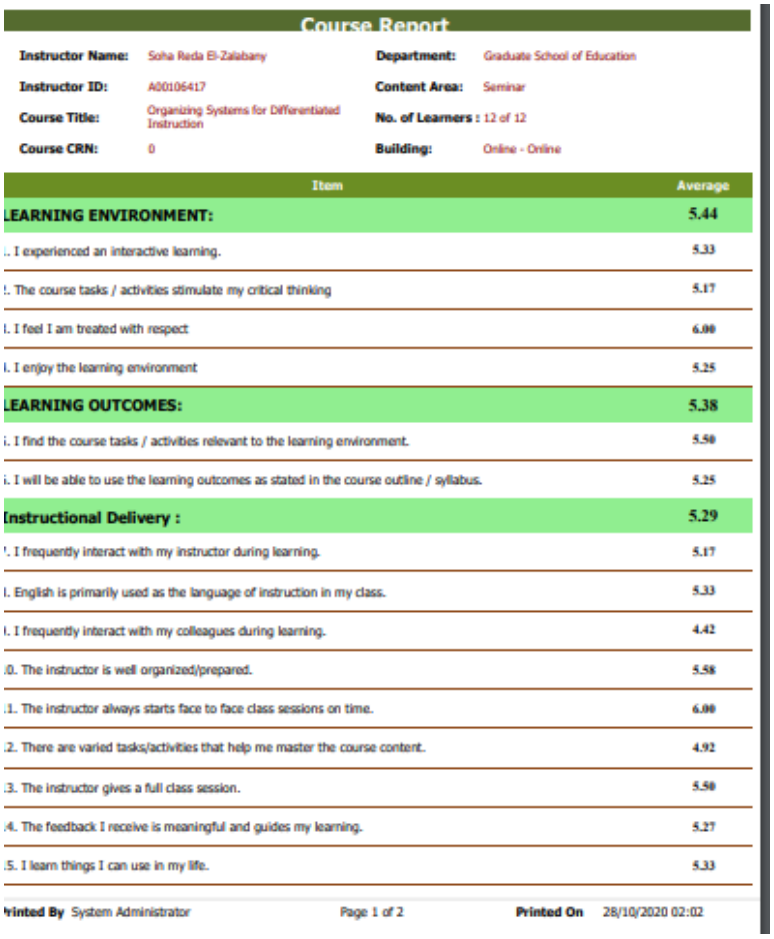
The Fieldnotes Observation Sheet

Fieldnotes Observation Form

Date		Scriber		No. of participants	
Session No.		Topic of Discussion			
Descriptive Notes			**Reflective Notes**		
What do the participants know about the topic?			How do the participants feel about the topic?		
What are the challenges the participants face?			How would you overcome the challenges in their context?		
Behavior	Words	Insights	Behavior	Words	Insights

Appendix O

Learner Evaluation of Instruction Form



Course Report

Instructor Name:	Soha Reda El-Zalabany	**Department:**	Graduate School of Education
Instructor ID:	A00106417	**Content Area:**	Seminar
Course Title:	Organizing Systems for Differentiated Instruction	**No. of Learners :**	12 of 12
Course CRN:	0	**Building:**	Online - Online

Item	Average
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:	**5.44**
.. I experienced an interactive learning.	5.33
!. The course tasks / activities stimulate my critical thinking	5.17
I. I feel I am treated with respect	6.00
I. I enjoy the learning environment	5.25
LEARNING OUTCOMES:	**5.38**
i. I find the course tasks / activities relevant to the learning environment.	5.50
i. I will be able to use the learning outcomes as stated in the course outline / syllabus.	5.25
Instructional Delivery :	**5.29**
'. I frequently interact with my instructor during learning.	5.17
I. English is primarily used as the language of instruction in my class.	5.33
I. I frequently interact with my colleagues during learning.	4.42
0. The instructor is well organized/prepared.	5.58
1. The instructor always starts face to face class sessions on time.	6.00
2. There are varied tasks/activities that help me master the course content.	4.92
3. The instructor gives a full class session.	5.50
4. The feedback I receive is meaningful and guides my learning.	5.27
5. I learn things I can use in my life.	5.33

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Course Report

Instructional Delivery :	**5.29**
6. My performance is assessed fairly in class.	5.36
COURSE ONLINE COMPONENT:	**5.12**
8. Orientation on the technologies used in the course is helpful.	4.92
9. Online materials and activities are easy to access.	5.33
0. Online components are well integrated in the course.	5.00
1. Online activities and materials are helpful to my learning	5.17
2. Technology support is adequate.	5.17
OVERALL	**5.28**

Appendix P

Focus Group Questions

FOCUS GROUP INTRODUCTION WELCOME

Thanks for agreeing to be part of the focus group. We appreciate your willingness to participate.

PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUPS

As a doctoral student, you have been asked to participate in this focus groups. The reason we are having these focus groups is to find out_____. We need your input and want you to share your honest and open thoughts with us.

GROUND RULES

1. WE WANT YOU TO DO THE TALKING. We would like everyone to participate. I may call on you if I have not heard from you in a while.
2. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. We want to hear a wide range of opinions.
3. WHAT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE We want folks to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up.
4. WE WILL BE TAPE RECORDING THE GROUP We want to capture everything you have to say. We do not identify anyone by name in our report. You will remain anonymous.

Focus Group Questions

1. What type of leadership do you think will help to implement inclusive system to support students with learning needs in your school?
2. How do you identify weak students in your classroom? how do you identify gifted students in your school?
3. How do you allow/ implement the support system in your school? What are the types of accommodations/enrichment opportunities you use that support their learning in the school?
4. Does the school have a pull-out system/co-teaching for enrichment as well as remedial teaching?
5. How do you think that this inclusive leadership intervention hep you as a leader to implement system/program to support students with learning needs in your school?
6. “Do you think that this course helps you to design a support system in your school? If yes what is your first step?”

Appendix Q

Reflective Log

Session 1

1. How do you think that authentic and transformational leadership will help to build an inclusive environment for students with learning needs in your school?

Session 3

1. How would you plan to implement programs to support academic diversity in your school?
2. Who are the team needed to make this program happen? what do you think about their necessary qualifications and suggested duties and responsibilities?

Session 5

3. What are the principles of PLC from your perspective?
4. How do you think you can establish a PLC at your workspace?
5. How do you think that the cycle of improvement can help you to support academic diversity at our school?

Criteria	**1**	**2**	**3**
Content	The answer reflects **limited** understanding of the content	The answer reflects **good** understanding of the content (one or two facts about the topic)	The answer reflects **excellent** understanding of the content (three to five facts about the topic)
Reflection	**Rarely** shows awareness of his/her strong areas and areas for development.	**Sometimes** shows awareness of his/her strong areas and areas for development.	**Usually** shows awareness of his/her strong areas and areas for development.
Evidence from your context	**Rarely** mentions real-life situation, and practical experience of his/her context	**Sometimes** mentions real-life situation, and practical experience of his/her context	**Usually** mentions real-life situation, and practical experience of his/her context

Total /9

Appendix R

Knowledge Test of Inclusive Leadership

1. Define the term Leadership in your own words. Describe types and traits of a) transformational, b) instructional, c) authentic, and d) shared leadership.
2. What is inclusive leadership? What are the necessary traits (personal and professional) promoting inclusive leadership?
3. What are the types of support systems, (evidence-based) existed in literature, promoting inclusive education?
4. What are the elements and procedures necessary to implement successful programs for students with learning difficulties and gifted students in your school?
5. How do you use the cycle of improvement in your school to evaluate the effectiveness of the specialized program for academic diversity?
6. How would you build professional learning community? What do you know about a) teacher teaming and b) Critical Friendship Groups?

Rubric for Pretest and Posttest

Criteria	**1**	**2**	**3**
Content	The answer reflects **limited** understanding of the content	The answer reflects **good** understanding of the content (three to five facts about the topic)	The answer reflects **excellent** understanding of the content (more than five facts about the topic)
Reflection	**Rarely** shows awareness of his/her strong areas and areas for development.	**Usually** shows awareness of his/her strong areas and areas for development.	**Mostly** shows sensitive awareness of his/her strong areas and areas for development.
Evidence from your context	**Rarely** mentions real-life situation, and practical experience of his/her context	**Usually** mentions real-life situation, and practical experience of his/her context	**Most of the time** mentions real-life situation, and practical experience of his/her context
Total	**/9**		

Appendix S

Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire contains items about different dimensions of authentic leadership. There are no right or wrong responses, so please answer honestly. Use the following scale when responding to each statement by writing the number from the scale below which you feel most accurately characterizes your response to that statement.

Key: 1 = Strongly disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree

1. I can list my three greatest weaknesses. 1 2 3 4 5
2. My actions reflect my core values. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I seek others' opinions before making up my own mind. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I openly share my feelings with others. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I can list my three greatest strengths. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I do *not* allow group pressure to control me. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I let others know who I truly am as a person. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am as a person. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I rarely present a "false" front to others. 1 2 3 4 5
13. I accept the feelings I have about myself. 1 2 3 4 5
14. My morals guide what I do as a leader. 1 2 3 4 5
15. I listen very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
16. I admit my mistakes to others. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix T

The Consultancy Protocol

SMP Modified Consultancy Protocol

Developed by the Southern Maine Partnership from the Consultancy Protocol by Gene Thompson Grove

1. **Initial Presentation** (5 minutes)
   Presentation team members present a quick overview (with or without handouts) of the matter they have chosen and frame 1-3 questions regarding problems or dilemmas that they want the response group to address.

2. **Clarifying Questions** (5 minutes)
   Response group members ask questions of the presenters that have factual answers of a phrase or two in length. They ask the presenters "who, what, where, when and how much" questions. Clarifying Questions do not include "why?" or "what other approaches have you considered?" questions. The purpose of clarifying questions is to help the questioner better understand the presenters' situation and their handouts (if any have been distributed); these questions are not likely to offer any "food for thought" to the presenters. **Clarifying Questions may also be asked during any later section of this protocol if necessary.**

4. **Probing Questions** (5 minutes)
   Response group members ask questions of the presenters that help the presenters clarify and extend their own thinking about the matter they have presented to the group. The group asks open-ended questions such as:
   - why...?
   - what other approaches have you considered regarding...?"
   - what do you think would happen if...?

   Answers to probing questions are usually longer than answers to clarifying questions. The presenters may need to think for a few moments before responding. Presenters may choose to not respond - other than to say that they may need to think more about the question.

5. **Non-presenter Discussion** (10 minutes)
   The response group talks with each other while the presenters listen and take notes; the presenters are not allowed to speak at this time (except to answer a clarifying question if one arises). It's usually helpful for the presenters to move their chairs back slightly away from the group where they can more easily attend to listening and note taking without feeling the need to give eye contact or any other kind of response to the speakers. The response group refers to the presenters in the third person in order to help maintain this separation throughout this section. This often feels awkward but it is only for a few minutes and the benefits can be substantial. Response group members may offer their analyses of the situation and possible, never definitive, ideas about solutions. They may characterize their comments as "warm" or "cool" feedback. Cool feedback is often best received if it comes after some "warm" feedback and if it is expressed in the form of a question or with some qualification and a measure of humility, e.g. "I wonder if..." rather than "I think he should..." It is also important for the presenters to listen carefully and in a non-defensive manner.

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org.

Appendix U

Leadership Training: Inclusive Leadership for Academic Diversity

Seminar Description

This training aims to help school leaders achieve a deeper understanding of how to include students with learning difficulties as well as gifted students in regular educational settings. Multi-tiered Support Systems support all students' emotional, social, learning development and achievement. School leaders will be able to lead and implement a well-planned system to support differentiated instruction in Egyptian schools.

Enrollment Criteria

 Senior or middle school management position: target group is school principal, vice principal, aspiring school leaders, heads of department, academic coordinator, special education and gifted coordinators and school administrators, teacher leader, and office manager.

 English proficiency, English Intermediate User, as indicated on Standardized English Proficiency Test (SEPT). SEPT exam cut-off score for acceptance in the Diploma is B1A. Participants with English degrees are exempted.

 No special/gifted education certification is required.

Title of sessions (five face-to-face sessions and one session online)

 Session #1: Exploring Beliefs about Leadership styles and traits supporting Differentiation.

 Session #2: Systems governing Differentiation

 Session #3: Programs Promoting Differentiation

 Session #4: Building Professional Learning Community for Differentiation

 Session #5 Action Planning for Differentiation

 Session #6 Practicum

Sessions take place at the **AUC New Cairo Campus** from **9:00 AM-3: 00 PM on the following dates:**
Saturday 29th of August to of 3rd of October 2020
Seminar Fees: 2400 LE

For reservations, please contact Mr. Waleed E. Ali
Senior Officer
Graduate School of Education (GSE)
The American University in Cairo (AUC)
Tel: +202-2615-1489
waleed.emad@aucegypt.edu

Appendix V

Description of the Asynchronous and Synchronous Sessions

Session	Topic/ Activity
Session 1 10th -12th October 2020 (Leadership)	Asynchronous: All participants watched the first prerecorded session's videos focused on three different topics: leadership, authentic leadership, and emotional intelligence. After the session, instructional videos and readings were provided about transformational and authentic leadership and emotional intelligence. A link to a reflective question was shared with all participants. Synchronous: All participants were engaged in an icebreaker for individual introductions in an interactive way. In breakout Zoom rooms, participants were divided into three groups to discuss and articulate their definition of leadership using a shared document on google drive. Then, they used an online game to match the leadership styles with their definitions. At the end of the session, school leaders filled in the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire using google forms.
Session 2 13th -16th October 2020 (System)	Asynchronous: All participants watched the two prerecorded session videos about the Schoolhouse Model describing a multilayered inclusive setting system and differentiation. The post-teaching videos and readings included in-depth information about multi-tiered systems of support, positive behavior support, characteristics of gifted students, red flags to identify students with difficulties, and a co-teaching model to support academic diversity. Synchronous: I started with a description of the target group of students who have diverse learning needs. Also, I explained the multi-tiered system of support and the Egyptian legislative act supporting these students' rights. Finally, I introduced the CFG's Consultancy Protocol. The first dilemma introduced a problem facing a special education coordinator in an international school.
Session 3 17th – 19th October 2020 (Program)	Asynchronous: All participants watched the prerecorded video about designing a school program to support students with diverse learning needs. Another presentation introduced information about remedial programs, accommodation and modification, and enrichment programs. The post-teaching instructional video and readings included information about accommodations and modifications, differentiation, and the ways to teach gifted and bright students in the classroom. A link to a reflective question was shared with all participants. Synchronous: The third session focused on the type of programs designed for students with diverse learning needs. The structured group activity focused on drafting gifted education school policy using a template shared online. The second dilemma discussion introduced a problem faced by a gifted education teacher who worked with 15 identified GT students in a resource room.
Session 4 20th -23rd October 2020 (PLC)	Asynchronous: All participants learned about the principles of professional learning communities. Also, the consultancy team and reflective practitioners' presentations were shared. Two websites were shared to support the participants' post-teaching learning (e.g., a website on how to create a winning professional learning community

	at their school and a website by Carol Ann Tomlinson to support teacher training about differentiation at their schools). Synchronous: Participants were engaged in group discussions about PLC in their schools. The third dilemma focused on a school principal's failure to establish PLC in her school.
Session 5 24th - 30th October 2020 (Action Planning)	Asynchronous: the prerecorded video focused on action planning and the cycle of improvement. Different websites were shared such as The PDCA Cycle, becoming a reflective practitioner, and mentoring and coaching. A link to a reflective question was shared with all participants. Synchronous: All participants were engaged in a group activity to draft a policy for academic diversity in their school. They were given a template online to collectively fill in. Before the end of the session, I informed the participants about their final session presentation requirements and expectations. They were asked to discuss their role as an agent of change in their school (i.e., Where do they see themselves in the organization? What do they do and need? How do they lead the change in their organization? What is their first step?).
Session 6 31st October 2020 (Final Presentations)	Asynchronous: All participants were requested to review all training materials. I informed the participants about my availability to meet them one-on-one to discuss any questions they have and their role in school change before the sixth session. Six participants scheduled an individual meeting to prepare for their presentation. All participants prepared their final presentations. A link for the posttest was shared. Synchronous: Each participant had five minutes to discuss their understanding of the relevant course content and to present their role. After the presentations, two groups of participants were engaged in a focus group for 35 and 60 minutes, respectively. .